

## **Minutes of the Regional meeting of the Cash Working Group of West & Central Africa**

**Place :** Virtual and face-to-face

**Date :** March 08, 2023 (9H-11H GMT)

**Participants :** 43 including 20 women

**Organizations :** Ground Truth Solutions, CARE, UNICEF, NRC, WFP, IOM, IMMAP, CICR, SCI, CAFOD UK, French Red-Cross, MercyCorps, Nigeria Red Cross, CONCERN, CBM Global, Department of Social Protection and Solidarity based Economy (DNPSES) / Mali and ECHO.

### **Context**

On March 8, 2023, the meeting of the regional Cash Working Groups of Western and Central Africa met virtually and face-to-face at the OCHA regional office. This 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 co-organized with the OCHA regional office and the agenda is centered around a roundtable discussion on recent activities of the various CWGs and presentations followed by various question-and-answer segments. Simultaneous interpretation in English and French is provided as well.

#### **1- Roundtable of the national Cash Working Groups**

Available on recording from 3mn- 44mn

- **Burkina Faso CWG**
  - Update on the cash ban in the Sahel region: no significant changes since the last meeting, however the Government has invited all the governors of all the regions of Burkina Faso to discuss on CVA from the specific perspective of social projects. Discussions are ongoing between the government and the CWG for a national workshop with humanitarian actors on risks and mitigation measures for CVA.
  - MEB and SMEB analysis for the update of the transfer amount (all cluster leads have been consulted).
- **Cameroon CWG**
  - Preparation of the National Exchange/Advocacy Workshop scheduled for April 5, 2023 (Government, humanitarian and development actors and social protection) for a better understanding of Cash by the government. This workshop is funded by WFP OCHA and the Cameroon International NGO Coordination Group. The themes selected for this meeting are strengthening communication between humanitarian actors and their government counterparts, risk analysis, the risk of beneficiary dependency on humanitarian aid, presentation, and calculation of the MEB.
  - There will be a delay in the finalization of the MEB and the transfer values as well in order to take in consideration the feedbacks of the Shelter Cluster.
- **Central African Republic CWG**
  - Upcoming workshop in March on the Cash Task Team's action plan for 2023 based on the HRP strategic objectives for the Cash modality.
  - Upcoming workshop in March on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2022 Cash Barometer survey report, a household perception survey on CVA programs - to define concrete follow-up actions for Cash Task Team's partners.
  - Meeting planned with UNICEF and WFP to discuss opportunities for social safety nets and social protection.
- **Mali CWG**

- Gender mainstreaming in CWG activities and PDMs.
- Gender dimension in social protection systems.
- **Niger CWG**
  - Finalization of the MSCWG action plan for 2023.
  - Review of the MEB SECAL gap for the lean season in relation to the availability of resources. Analysis by WFP and the Early Warning System (EWS) show that beneficiaries could meet 18% of their needs and 82% by partners.
  - Capacity building of the members and a better institutional relation with the government.
- **Nigeria CWG**
  - HCT's efforts to defend unhindered CVA programs in the face of severe naira shortages and the Central Bank of Nigeria's stringent policy limiting cash withdrawal amounts - In response to this problem, recommendations from the workshop on CVA and inflation and monetary depreciation have been retained for further application.
  - Revision of the MEB is underway as the last revision was in 2021 and as noted there is high inflation throughout the country - A meeting with the Cash Task Team is scheduled for the upcoming week.
- **Tchad CWG**
  - Validation of the 2023 work plan at the next meeting (Thursday, March 9).
  - Review of the 4W matrix for CVA.
  - Development of SOPs for CVA transfers.
  - Joint market monitoring initiative of REACH (exploration phase).
  - Request for partnership with CashCAP through OCHA HQ.
- **DRC CWG**
  - The transition process to the new CWG coordination model - Draft of the first ToR has been initiated.
  - The ban on CVAs in Kasai province is much more directed at the Food Security cluster.

**2- CVA as a lifeline for the future? Perceptions of cash and voucher assistance recipients in CAR and in Nigeria – Ground truth Solutions**

Available on recording from 44mn:30s – 1H20mn

In pursuit of an in-depth analysis of the impact of humanitarian aid on affected people and their concerns/views, Ground Truth Solutions once again shares with us through this presentation the results of the Cash barometer in CAR and Nigeria. This perception study funded by GFFO and conducted in 2022, uses as methodologies: quantitative surveys, qualitative user journeys and dialogues with the respective communities.

At the end of this study, in CAR (Locations: Paoua, Bangui, Kaga Bandoro) and Nigeria (Bay states), regarding the relevancy of aid, just 42% and 55% of respondents respectively stated that aid covered their highest priority needs. The needs expressed differ from country to country, but the common unmet need is food.

In terms of information on the availability of the various CVAs, a positive rating was observed for both countries (95% in Nigeria and 75% in CAR); however, what is more worrying is that a large majority of these same respondents have no idea of the duration of this assistance (64% in CAR and 66% in Nigeria).

**This lack of information was noted in all the countries involved in this study, making it even more difficult for affected people and humanitarians to make progress.**

The issue of beneficiary participation in decision making can be improved in CAR in comparison to Nigeria. In terms of modality preference, there is a clear difference between countries, in CAR,

66% of respondents prefer cash while in Nigeria, 47% of respondents prefer vouchers. The study suggests that these latter results might be biased for these reasons: familiarity, difficulty in comparing alternative modalities and by "courtesy" (More details in the presentation).

GTS has also published a blog on this topic to further discuss about modality preferences under this following link : <https://www.groundtruthsolutions.org/news/modality-preferences-are-uninformed-choices-leading-us-down-the-wrong-road> .

By way of recommendations from this study: **Choices are not choices if they are uninformed.**

The entire humanitarian community is called upon to act on Strategies and Mechanisms for the participation of affected people (e.g., setting up a hotline or system for reporting wrongdoing by vendors or service providers and associated sanctions). It should be noted that the studies considered the dynamics of the markets in terms of price fluctuations and availability of goods.

Workshops that will bring together national/international donors and NGOs and government representatives are planned for later this year in Nigeria for further discussions.

### **3- Integrating financial inclusion into humanitarian assistance through cash transfers. World Food Program**

Available on recording from 1H21mn-1H43mn

This presentation by WFP is an opportunity to present its new comprehensive cash transfer policy that will be validated in June of this year. This new financial inclusion policy prioritizes women's financial independence over the next 5-10 years while also involving men via cash transfers instead of traditional vouchers.

According to statistics, Africa is far behind in terms of ownership and use of financial services and within the sub-Saharan region, women are consistently less likely than men to have access to formal financial services (banks and mobile money). Through the new program, WFP can provide initial access to bank or mobile money accounts for women and help governments do the same. Beyond an annual payment cycle, WFP aims to enable women to receive regular money transfers (from WFP or other humanitarian institutions and governments), legal documents, financial education, make financial products available to them (savings, microcredit, insurance) and eventually contribute to the digital economy.

At the end of the presentation, WFP clarified that the program works jointly with communities by consulting them on their preferences and knowledge of different financial accounts. The goal is to progressively replace food vouchers and direct cash assistance with more inclusive financial means, and for this purpose, the program is ready to share its approaches and resources with all interested agencies.

### **4- Scoping Mission to West Africa - CashCap**

Available on recording from 1H46mn-2H01mn

CashCap is part of NORCAP, the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) global group of expertise in the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding sectors. CashCap has recently been in the region to support CWG coordination.

During the mission to Dakar in December 2022 with OCHA and CALP, and in meetings held internally, CashCap identified 06 CVA needs in the West and Central Africa region. These needs can be categorized into three areas of intervention: technical assistance, capacity building and coordination.

In addition to this potential role in the region, CashCap will deploy 03 experts based in the following countries: Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Mali. At the request of the countries, a percentage of 30% can be allocated for the regional component which would target the following lines of action:

- Rely on evidence-based country documents.
- Actively participate in CWG meetings for humanitarian communication and advocacy.
- Support and integrate joint advocacy efforts of national CWGs with relevant interagency platforms at the regional level.
- Support the formulation and use of advocacy messages at the regional level.

**5- Any other business**

Available on recording from 2h02mn through the end

- Next regional CWG meeting scheduled on May 10th.
- Two trainings are planned for French speakers as part of the expansion of the CALP certified trainer cohort:
  - **A face-to-face training of trainers on Core CVA Skills for Programme Staff** is scheduled from April 24 -28, 2023 in Dakar. Registrations are ongoing under this [link](#) until March 19 at OOH00 GMT.
  - **An online training course: Core CVA Skills for Programme Staff** pour le delivered by **Key Aid Consulting** with CALP accreditation is planned. This 12-week online training for staff involved in designing, implementing, and monitoring CVA programs is equivalent to the 05-day face-to-face training. Please visit the Key Aid Consulting page for more information. <https://www.keyaidconsulting.com/training/calp-competences-transferts-monetaires-personnel-programme/>