

Minutes of the Regional Cash Working Group Meeting

Place : Virtual and face-to-face

Date : July 05th, 2023 (9-11H UTC)

Participants : 77 including 21 women

Organizations : Direction of Social Protection and Solidarity Economy (DNPSES) / Mali, Solidarités International, Samaritan Purse, Care Cameroun, DG ECHO, USAID, REACH, UNICEF, CICR, Save the Children, OXFAM, MercyCorps, UNHCR, COOPI Niger, World Bank, FAO, USAID, World Vision, Christian Aid, Première Urgence, WFP Cameroon, Welthungerhilfe, IMMAP, CRS, MSF, Acted, NRC, CAFOD.

Context

On July 5, 2023, the meeting of the regional Cash Working Groups of Western and Central Africa was held 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 for 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 (4mn30s- 52mn10s)

• Burkina Faso CWG

- Arrival of new Burkina CWG coordinator (co-lead) - Sani Dan Aoude / CashCap.
- Updating of the legal Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) protocol, defining the roles and obligations of stakeholders, as well as sanctions. The next step will be to designate the signatories, with the government side (consensus of three ministries) and the partner's side represented by the Humanitarian Coordinator, the International Federation of Red Cross, and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), donors and national and international NGOs. Although complex, this protocol could influence the lifting of the ban on CVA in the Sahel and North Central region by framing the role of the stakeholders.
- The update on the sub-national CWG was postponed to a later date, in order to focus on meetings linked to the CVA protocol update.
- Reflection on the establishment of a specific budget line for multiple-use species transfers (TEUM) - HRP 2024 for national CWGs.

• Cameroon CWG

- Launch of joint market monitoring to identify the impact of prices on MEB and transfer values. Food commodities will be monitored by all partners, while non-food commodities will be monitored with the support of REACH.
- Multi-sector assessment in the Far North region in collaboration with the government's Social Protection sector.

• Central African Republic CWG

- Preparation of the 12 of July's workshop on corrective actions associated with the recommendations of the study on beneficiaries' perceptions of CVA in collaboration with Ground Truth Solutions, the Accountability Working Group, donors, and members of the Cash Taskforce.
- Study planned for late July to identify practical options for improving decision-making on CVA programs in hard-to-reach areas in the Sahel.

- Update on the Sudanese refugee crisis: markets are not functional in the Tiraou area therefore food assistance is the preferred choice.
- **Niger CWG**
 - UNHCR-facilitated training workshop on data protection for members, with the participation of several international NGOs.
 - Setting up a focus group with financial service providers (FSPs) on transfer amounts. The MSCWG recommended producing an advocacy note for FSPs to harmonize transfer rates and amounts between organizations, especially in hard-to-reach areas. The work will be finalized at the end of July.
 - Joint missions with the Lead, Co-lead and Co-facilitators for the popularization and use of the MEB at national level and especially in the regions.
 - Two discussion sessions with Niger's Registre Social Unifié-RSU (Unified Social Registry) were initiated by the MSCWG, in May and June, to create the conditions for collaboration with partners. The RSU is still in the data collection phase and has yet to be fully functional. However, it is important to establish this connection in order to further involve the government and facilitate assessments in hard to reach areas.
- **Nigeria CWG**
 - Finalization of MEB report after presentation to ISCG and consultations with sector coordinators.
 - Data collection exercise in collaboration with partners on CVA mapping and its ongoing implementation.
- **Tchad CWG**
 - Introduction of the new Co-lead (Hassane Djibril /CashCap).
 - MEB update.
 - Finalization of the 3W for 2023, meeting with PSFs to harmonize commission rates, registration, and identification of beneficiaries in accordance with the law.
 - Preparation of the July 24-28 training session (CALP) on specialized modules.
- **RDC CWG**
 - Investigation into the recent embezzlement of \$900K from GiveDirectly. This amount was earmarked for TM assistance, but misappropriation by PSF is suspected.
 - Evolution of the revision of the MEB value - Follow-up of food commodities.
 - 4W sharing at national level, with a slight drop in training compared with the same quarter last year.

2- Multipurpose Cash in Planning Documents - HNO/HRP

Available on recording (53mn – 1H44mn)

The first presentation of this meeting comes at an opportune moment of the year, as it coincides in several countries with the period for updating the humanitarian programming process (HNO/HRP).

At the same time, the OCHA Regional Representative recalled that the aim of revising the coordination mechanism is to strengthen coordination around the CWG with the multi-sectoral component, given that there is no longer any doubt about the added value that the CVA modality has in terms of taking into account the various needs and the multi-sectoral response.

It is for this reason that in the HNO and HRP process, CWGs have the role of highlighting sectoral CVA and, to a greater extent, multi-sectoral CVA. In 2023, as part of the humanitarian programme cycle, the current analysis shows an increase in the number of countries taking into account Multipurpose cash i.e., 17/20 (85%). This last term refers to Cash transfers which are

“multipurpose” if explicitly designed to address multiple needs, with the transfer value calculated accordingly.

In the drafting of the respective HNO and HRP documents, there are global guidelines that the HPC coordination manager of each OCHA/country office has available to share with the national Intercluster. In the response plan guidelines, chapter 1.6 is dedicated to CVA coordination and should include this minimum information:

- The objectives of the Multipurpose cash transfers (MPC or MPC assistance)
- MPC targets (e.g., population)
- MPC financial requirements (see budgets for 2021 and 2022)
- Geographical coverage
- Details on MPC coordination (CWG and ICCG linkages) and linkages/complementarity to sectoral cash interventions (if relevant)
- Monitoring plan and indicators (GB MPC Indicators)

This section should not only highlight the CWG's performance, but also propose a plan of action and possible solutions for the following year, in response to the challenges and weaknesses noted in the field. More than a narrative, the document should reflect the country's humanitarian community and have the approval of the local government in place. The list of recommendations is not exhaustive, and any information relevant to understanding the context may be included. In the narrative of the humanitarian needs analysis, although there is no chapter dedicated to TM, it is important to ensure that the question of TM is considered in a transversal way, reflected in terms of feasibility and risks. The issue of modality preference by communities needs to be highlighted transparently and supported by data. Any response announced in the HRP must be justified according to the needs and contexts announced in the HNO (it is best to take advantage of Ground Truth solutions surveys, REACH etc).

It is important to note that the sectorial cash corresponds to the sector page, therefore in section 1.6, the focus will be on MPC and CVA coordination and its links with the sectorial cash. Key points for inclusion in HPC processes are available in the shared presentation.

During the discussions, the recommendations were as follows:

- Properly ask modality preference questions in PDMs.
- Analyze the results of modality preference questions while maintaining the technical objectivity of the results given by the beneficiaries.
- Technical analysis of the best modality choice, considering the context and type of beneficiary.
- Avoid analysis gaps and share results in an objective and transparent way.

An interesting blog to read on modality preferences
Des choix mal informés nous mènent-ils dans la mauvaise direction?
<https://www.calpnetwork.org/fr/blog/preferences-de-modalite-des-choix-mal-informes-nous-menent-ils-dans-la-mauvaise-direction/>

3- Cash and Voucher Assistance in hard to reach – an opportunity for early input to the study. CALP/Something Meaningful Consulting

Available on recording in video format (1H45mn-1H56mn)

The second presentation of this meeting is in video format due to the unavailability of the consultant.

CALP is in the process of conducting a study through this consulting firm on payments in hard-to-reach areas, in an effort to identify opportunities for the humanitarian community in the Sahel to better design cash transfer programs. The study will run from June to September this year and aims to :

- Finding the trade-offs between scale and equitable coverage.
- Understand the current situation of CVA assistance for populations in hard-to-reach areas: enabling factors, actors, providers, and policies; challenges and opportunities associated with the types of assistance mechanisms used for each type of modality.
- Identify ways of strengthening the cash transfer ecosystem to increase its capacity to assist hard-to-reach populations.

The methodology used is that of in-depth documentary analysis and data collection via qualitative interviews at national and regional level, more specifically in Nigeria, Burkina Faso and CAR. The results of this research will be published in the form of a report to facilitate decision-making by operational agencies in their CVA responses to populations living in hard-to-reach areas. The report will also include independent information on the trade-offs and equitable coverage of CVA assistance in the Sahel.

To ensure the success of this project, CALP through Something Meaningful is inviting all humanitarian actors in the region to share sources for the literature review and to participate in focus groups/interviews. In the coming months, a webinar will be organized to report on the main findings and recommendations of the report.

4- Any other business

Available on recording (1H56mn to the end)

- Webinar on Transfer Value Calculation, scheduled for July 10, with respective experiences from the Cameroon and Niger CWGs.
- Webinar on Remote targeting approaches: global lessons and applications in West and Central Africa, scheduled for July 18.
- Update of the free online training on the KAYA platform on the theme: Combining humanitarian cash transfers and social protection.

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/view.php?id=4464>

En français : Associer les transferts monétaires humanitaires et la protection sociale -

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/view.php?id=4906>