

Minutes of the Regional Cash Working Group of Western and Central Africa

Place : Virtual and face-to-face

Date : 06 septembre 2023 (9-11H GMT)

Participants : 68 including 15 women

Organizations : Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, IMMAP, UNHCR, British Red-Cross, CRS, OXFAM UK, OCHA Mali, Plan International, WFP Cameroon, Ground Truth Solutions, CARE, SCI, OCHA Burkina Faso, Première Urgence Internationale, World Bank, REACH, IOM, IFRC, ICRC, World Vision, FCDO UK, USAID, MercyCorps, ACF, Solidarités Internationales, DRC, USAID, Croix-Rouge France, DCA, Union for the Protection and Defense of Human Rights and the Environment (upddheongafrica) and DNPSES/ Mali Government and ECHO.

Context

On May 9, 2023, the meeting of the regional cash working group of Western and Central Africa on Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) was held in virtual and face-to-face mode at the OCHA regional office. The meeting is part of the support provided by the regional CWG to the national CWGs in the region with the financial support of the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA/USAID). This meeting was co-organized with the OCHA regional office.

The agenda is centered around a roundtable discussion on recent activities of the various CWGs and presentations followed by question-and-answer segments, all with simultaneous interpretations in English and French.

1- Roundtable of the national CWGs

Available on the recording (5 - 43mn)

• Burkina Faso CWG

- Validation workshop on the CVA protocol attended by all stakeholders, where editorial changes were incorporated into the documents.
 - o The next stage of this protocol is for the various partners to sign and implement it.
 - o The protocol does not solve all the current difficulties related to the use of cash. However, it is a first step towards resolving the situation by allowing the use of CVA in the other provinces and possibly lifting the restrictions on cash.
 - o The Governor of the Sahel region remains opposed to the use of CVA on his territory, for the time being.
- Suspension of all CVA distribution procedures in the province of Gnagna, Eastern Region, by decision of the High Commissioner until further notice. The CWG is in discussion with the partners and the government authorities to understand the reasons for this suspension and to resume dialogue.

• Cameroon CWG

- Validation of the results of the joint intersectoral market monitoring study to determine transfer values for food aid and non-food items.
- A training workshop on MEB and transfer values organized by the CWG is planned for October. The aim of this training is to achieve a common understanding of the methodologies used to calculate and adjust these tools for inflation.
- Roadmap in line with the new governance model recommended by the Global cash Advisory Group (CAG) at the global level, scheduled for March 2024.
- Feasibility study on crisis management underway. Update the functionality of markets, financial providers, and key risks according to different zones and crises.

• Central African Republic (CAR) CWG

- Exchange sessions on the MEB with WFP, REACH, OCHA and CONCERN planned within the month.
- Exchange sessions at Cash taskforce level are also planned with various implementing partners and FSPs to harmonize the interest rate.
- Payments in "Hard-to- reach" populations study underway.

- Renewed contact with the Social Protection taskforce. Working sessions are planned for future cooperation with the Cash and the Social Protection taskforce.
- Presentation of the Red Rose company to various implementing partners in CAR for possible collaboration.
- **Mali CWG**
 - MEB data analysis workshop attended by government agencies and clusters.
 - The Social Protection and Cash Taskforce (a sub-group of the CWG) was asked to develop a social protection baseline for Mali.
 - Preparation of the 05-day face-to-face training on Core CVA skills for programme staff, scheduled for October.
- **Nigeria CWG**
 - Completion of the review of the MEB report by the Northeast Region CWG following the previous 2021 report.
 - Completion of CVA mapping and market data collection. Needs assessment is underway.
 - Following the recommendations of the study on inflation and currency depreciation conducted by CALP in several countries, including Nigeria, the CWG has continued to develop the terms of reference and methods for mapping PSF to preserve the purchasing power of beneficiaries.
- **Chad CWG**
 - Delivery of 3 training sessions for specialized modules [Market Assessment Tools, Social Nets and Coordination] during July with the support of CALP, OCHA and WFP.
 - Activation of the Eastern Region CWG, based in Bêché due to the conflict in Sudan.
 - Meeting with the various FSPs to set up a taskforce to deal with the grievances of Cash operators, in particular issues relating to taxation and exemptions for people without identification documents. – Mapping of the FSPs from January to June 2023.

2- Perception study: women's opinions on CVA in the Maiduguri periphery: Presentation and reflection on the results, Ground Truth Solutions

Available on recording (43mn10s - 1H43mn)

As part of the Cash Barometer projects, GTS came to present the results of two studies focusing on the relationship between gender and CVA in humanitarian contexts, and the relationship between beneficiaries and intermediate actors. The first study focuses specifically on women's perceptions of these transfers by analyzing their situation in the outskirts of Maiduguri, a region in northeastern Nigeria. This qualitative study is a compilation of interviews with twenty-one women, eighteen of whom are beneficiaries and heads of households, and three of whom are women's representatives. They are from three different communities. The aim of this study is to provide a space for women to discuss their experiences in depth, to make suggestions for improving aid delivery, and to understand their role within their community.

The complete report of this study is available at this following link: <https://www.groundtruthsolutions.org/library/jne5xl2om6xbopvu7jejc107bx3x2v>.

The conclusions drawn from this study are as follow:

- **Positive outcomes and good practices were observed in** cash and voucher assistance. The flexibility, stability and security offered by these transfers were appreciated. There was also a marked preference for monthly transfers, to avoid any mismanagement inherent in larger transfers. Beneficiaries expressed their satisfaction with the security measures taken at the established distribution points.
- **CVA transfers can provoke household tensions** - According to more than half of the women surveyed, feelings of jealousy and exclusion were expressed by men - Changes in gender roles. Despite these family difficulties, women nevertheless want to benefit from this help to ensure their family's collective well-being.

- **Women feel silenced and find it difficult to voice their concerns** - The involvement of women's representatives is useful but insufficient, as the level of influence of women's representatives varies from one community to another, and the real decision-making power often remains in the hands of the male community leader. Therefore, in order to establish a genuine dialogue and maintain a relationship of trust with beneficiaries, it is essential that humanitarian actors engage with beneficiaries on an ongoing basis through direct (face-to-face) interaction.

The second part of GTS's presentation focuses on the power dynamics between people affected by the humanitarian crisis and intermediary actors in the camp for internally displaced persons in Kaga-Bandoro, Central African Republic. This study reveals inappropriate practices and abuse of power perpetrated in particular by certain community leaders and vendors during transactions, in terms of price, quality and behavior.

In addition, it is regrettable to note that the affected people do not express their concerns, as they consider this aid to be a gift.

Please find attached the link to the full report on the situation in the Central African Republic:

<https://www.groundtruthsolutions.org/library/k4kq6fey9qllib1dwmzxs46i0nib4t>.

From an accountability point of view, following the presentation of the Cash Barometer studies, a working group was set up to reflect on **ways of mitigating gender-related tensions and abuses of power by intermediaries** (See the summary of good practices identified by humanitarian actors based on their operational experiences)

3- **CALP's new vision of learning: training, certification, technical support**

Available on recording (1H44mn-2H02mn)

As a reminder, CALP presented learning opportunities considering CALP's new vision. With the increasing use of CVAs, it is important for CALP to strengthen both the organizational and individual capacities of humanitarian actors.

However, in this perspective of empowerment, the position of CALP in the training of humanitarian actors has evolved. CALP has shifted from a role of direct intervener to that of facilitator, promoting collaboration between humanitarian organizations through collective work. As a result, the delivery of training courses will gradually be outsourced to CALP-accredited trainers. The priorities in CALP's approach to capacity building are as follows: CWGs, training delivery by local capacity, diversity, and expansion of the pool of certified trainers, co-facilitation opportunities and cost-sharing between different organizations. Considering this, CALP will continue to improve existing training content, develop new content and diversify training.

or assistance in preparing your CALP-accredited training or registering for a course, the following link is available to professionals in the humanitarian sector:

<https://www.calpnetwork.org/fr/learning-tools/facilitated-training/about-calps-facilitated-training/>.

4- **AOB**

- Upcoming regional CWG meeting is planned for the beginning of November.
- the Global Protection Cluster team has launched a helpdesk service to provide all Social Protection-related organizations with strategic guidance and technical support for field operations in the performance of their essential functions.
https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/issues/cash_protection