



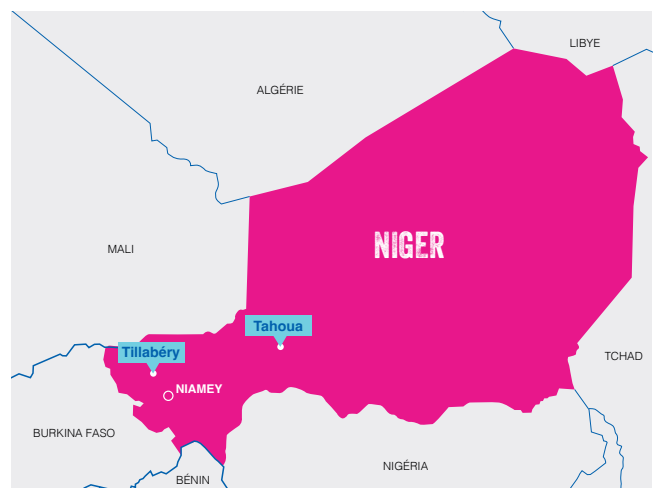
CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE IN NIGER

CVA FEASIBILITY STUDY KEY FINDINGS



METHODOLOGY

A mixed qualitative and quantitative data gathering was conducted by Plan International in August 2022 in Niger through market survey, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in Tillabery (Ouallam and Torodi) and Tahoua regions. A total of 131 traders from the major markets system were interviewed, while a total of 41 FGDs were held separately with women, men, girls, and boys. A total of 16 KIIs were conducted with head of government agencies, humanitarian organizations, Financial Service Providers (FSPs) and other actors in the two regions.



OBJECTIVES

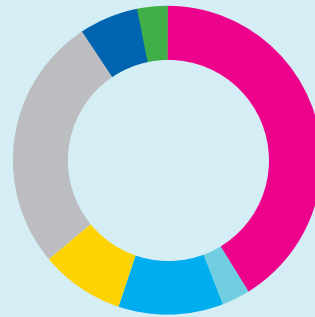
The objective of the study was to assess the feasibility of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) programming and market-based modalities to meet the emergency needs of the affected communities in Tillabery (Ouallam and Torodi) and Tahoua with respect to Food Security, Protection, Education, and Livelihoods.



KEY FINDINGS

Main issues faced by communities

- Food security has been identified as the main issue by 41% of the FGDs participants.
- According to 27% of the participants, conflict and insecurity are the root of all their problems.
- Unemployment, lack of income, lack of water, poor access to education, and poverty in general were among the problems identified by the participants.



- Food Insecurity (41%)
- Conflict/Insecurity (27%)
- Unemployment (11%)
- Lack of income (9%)
- Water (6%)
- Poverty (3%)
- Access to education (3%)



Food security

The FGDs in Tillabery and Tahoua highlighted the following negative coping mechanisms adopted by the households (HHs) when faced with food insecurity:

About **80% OF THE HHs** consumed less preferred food in at least 4 days in the last 7 days.

At least **76% BORROWED FOOD** from relatives and friends at least 3 times in the last 7 days.

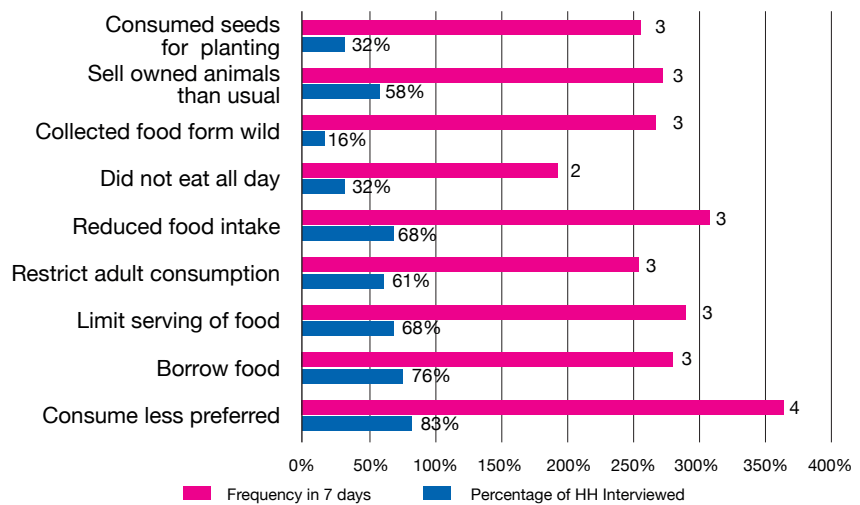
About **68% LIMITED SERVINGS OF FOOD** to cope with food insecurity in at least 3 days in the last 7 days.

At least **61% RESTRICTED FOOD** intake of adults to allow children to eat.

58% MENTIONED THE DISPOSAL OF PRODUCTIVE assets like animals to buy food items.

Around **32% DID NOT EAT ALL DAY** in at least 3 days in the last 7 days due to lack of money to buy food.

Coping Strategies Used when faced with Food Insecurities





Education

Low participation rates in primary and secondary education:

Data from UNICEF showed a total of 890 closed schools as of August 2022. About 92% or **871 CLOSED SCHOOLS WERE IN THE TILLABERY REGION**, affecting a total of 71,936 children including 35,811 girls.

Interviews with school staff and data from KIIs indicated increased **SCHOOL DROPOUTS AND LOW ENROLMENT** rates due to financial constraints to pay for school fees, insecurity leading to displacement, and long-distance walks to the schools..



Child protection

Children and child protection stakeholders reported a **HIGH PREVALENCE OF CHILD LABOR** for both girls and boys, leading to school drop-outs or reduced attendance rates. This is mainly due to insecurity leading to displacement and lack of income to meet their basic needs. Respondents mentioned child labor on the gold mining sites in particular and other types of activities affecting mainly boys who have consequently dropped out of school.

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) reported the presence of **UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN** in their communities who need basic assistance in education, protection and food security.



Wash

67% OF THE RESPONDENTS PRACTICE OPEN DEFECATION

which exposes them to health risks. The toilet/latrines construction/distribution is also limited in some of the villages, as well as in refugees and IDPs camps.

Respondents using latrines during the day and night indicated that they are **LIMITED IN NUMBER AND SHALLOW**, which means that they fill up quickly and expose them to health risks such as acute waterborne diseases.





MARKET SYSTEM AND FUNCTIONALITY

The feasibility study led by Plan International assessed the market functionality and availability of basic commodities based on the needs of the communities.

- All of the **131 INTERVIEWED STORE OWNERS** in primary and secondary markets **AGREED TO PARTICIPATE IN CVA ACTIVITIES**.
- The prices vary slightly between the two regions but higher price difference was noted on some of the school supplies, particularly bags but this may be due to the design and brands.
- **80% TO 90% OF THE TRADERS HAVE AVAILABLE STOCKS** and have the capability to restock to meet the demand should it increase due to injection of cash in the target areas.



FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Presence of several banks that can distribute cash to project participants such as Ecobank, Banque Atlantique, Sonibank, and Bank of Africa.
- Presence of telecommunication networks and mobile money services such as Airtel, Niger Telecom, Moov, and Zamani Telecom (Orange).
- Presence of RedRose as one of the global financial service provider. It can provide support in terms of registration, enrolment to the system, database management, disbursement of fund through local FSPs, and monitoring including the post distribution monitoring.
- Engagement of several FSPs would help to cover all the CVA needs in the program areas based on the appropriateness of the services offered against the local context and selected delivery mechanisms.





RECOMMENDATIONS

- **CASH TRANSFER:** Projects should align the cash transfer value for Multi-purpose Cash Grants to the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB). Should the MEB not be revised during the implementation phase of a project then the same amount can be used to reach out to more participants or top-up cash transfer to the same participants. The current MEB to support food needs stands at 50 to 61 €, UNHCR using 66.5 € for HHs of 1 to 3 people, and 114 € for those with more than 4 people.
- **CASH FOR LIVELIHOODS:** Projects should prioritize providing cash as start-up grants to establish enterprise, workshop and also to purchase livelihood kits.
- **COMMODITY VOUCHER** is recommended for activities when the cash transfer isn't technically possible or is not permitted by authorities, or in case of speculation that would not allow to achieve the project's objective through the cash transfer.
- **POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING** should be conducted within two weeks after cash or voucher distribution.
- **CASH FOR WORK** should be undertaken for rehabilitation of public assets such as in schools for cleaning and levelling the ground, building classrooms and toilets, and constructing of Child Friendly Spaces and Education Centres.
- Recommendations from **RAPID GENDER ANALYSIS** should be integrated as well as potential risks of gender-based violence induced by the cash and voucher programming. Both men and women of the target communities should be engaged in the identification of the beneficiaries and pre-distribution. Sensitization of all genders will hence be necessary as also setting up of robust feedback response mechanism for addressing safeguarding, protection and quality concerns.
- **SAFEGUARDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS** including complaints procedures should be established. Both women and men staff should be part of this mechanism so that the community's members feel comfortable in reporting. A comprehensive monitoring system should be put in place with direct monitoring and PDM including satisfactory assessment.
- **SECURITY SITUATION AND GUIDANCE SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT**, and appropriate procedures to ensure staff and projects participants' security should be implemented.
- It is recommended to have a **DEDICATED CVA SPECIALIST** in the country of implementation to ensure sustained technical support and grow the CVA portfolio of the organization.



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