

# RAPID REFLECTION ON THE SCALE-UP OF CASH COORDINATION

FOR THE TÜRKIYE EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The opinions expressed are those of the Key Aid Consulting team, and do not necessarily reflect the views of CALP. Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report rests solely with the authors.

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## ACRONYMS

CAG	Cash Advisory Group
CBI TWG	Cash-Based Interventions Technical Working Group
CVA	Cash and voucher assistance
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net
FSP	Financial service provider
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JMA	Joint Market Assessment
KI	Key informant
MEB	Minimum expenditure basket
MoFSS	Ministry of Family and Social Services
MPC	Multi-purpose cash
NFI	Non-food item
RCM	Refugee Coordination Model
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRC	Turkish Red Crescent
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme





The February 2023 earthquakes on the Türkiye–Syria border killed over 50,000 people and injured more than 100,000,<sup>1</sup> further exacerbating vulnerabilities and increasing humanitarian needs in an area already affected by a 12-year-long conflict and refugee crisis.<sup>2</sup>

The magnitude of the disaster and the significant use of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) to respond to the needs emphasized the importance of quality cash coordination. Using the Global Cash Advisory Group (CAG) key performance indicators for cash coordination as a guide, this paper reflects on the extent to which cash coordination was: (1) timely and effective, and (2) inclusive, transparent and accountable.

It draws from five semi-structured key informant interviews, desk review of available literature and a round table organized on 3rd August 2023 with key cash stakeholders.

<sup>1</sup> UN.org. (2023). 'Türkiye–Syria Earthquake Response'. <https://www.un.org/en/turkiye-syria-earthquake-response>

<sup>2</sup> Hisham Khan. (2023). 'The Turkey and Syria Earthquake'. ReliefWeb. <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkiye/turkey-and-syria-earthquake>

# OI CONTEXT

**Following the earthquakes on the Türkiye–Syria border, the United Nations launched a US\$1 billion Flash Appeal, which included a dedicated multi-purpose cash assistance (MPC) Chapter,<sup>3</sup> of which US\$70.16 million was allocated to Türkiye. Sectoral cash was also extensively used, especially in the areas of Shelter/Non-Food Items, Food Security and Early Recovery and Livelihoods.<sup>4</sup>**

## A COMPLEX ARCHITECTURE

Pre-earthquake humanitarian response implemented in Türkiye was coordinated through the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), led by UNHCR. In February 2023, the earthquake response triggered the establishment of an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) coordination model. This led to a multilayered architecture incorporating the pre-existing RCM model, the IASC coordination model and the government response.<sup>5</sup> The articulation between the RCM and IASC models manifested differently across sectors/clusters, yet consistently resulted in a complex structure. Cash coordination remained with the Cash-Based Interventions Technical Working Group (CBI TWG), with structure and ToR of the group adjusted to the earthquake response.

## A PRE-EXISTING AND WELL-ESTABLISHED CBI TWG

The CBI TWG oversaw cash coordination in Türkiye from the outset of the earthquake response. The CBI TWG is led by UNHCR, as was the case prior to the earthquake. The Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) assumed the role of co-chair for the earthquake response, in lieu of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The implementation of a local co-chair is in the spirit of the new cash coordination model, with the new model being rolled out in Türkiye by September 2023.<sup>6</sup>

By 13th March, the CBI TWG revised its Terms of Reference (ToR) to align with the Flash Appeal.<sup>7</sup> The most significant changes between the pre-earthquake ToR and the post-earthquake ToR capture the shift in contexts and provide relevant updates on: (i) the purpose, roles and responsibilities of the CBI TWG (the post-earthquake ToR outlines additional CBI TWG responsibilities such as mapping government-led CVA related to the earthquake and identifying entry points for social protection linkages); and (ii) the CBI TWG's meeting schedule (meetings became weekly instead of bi-monthly).<sup>8</sup>

## STRONG PRE-EXISTING CVA CAPACITIES AND LARGE-SCALE CVA PROGRAMME

Türkiye has, historically, been a fertile ground for cash interventions. The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), the largest cash programme in the world,<sup>9</sup> is illustrative of in-country humanitarian actors' capacity to deliver CVA. Pre-earthquake government-led cash programmes adapted their assistance to support

3 UN OCHA. (2023). 'Syria and Türkiye Flash Appeal, Appeal Data, MCPA paid contributions'. <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/1149/summary>; <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/1150/summary>  
Note that within the Flash Appeal, the Multi-Purpose Cash & Social Protection sector targeted 1.5 million earthquake-affected people and appealed for US\$143.6 million. Sectoral cash and voucher assistance is planned under the Shelter/NFI, Food Security, Early Recovery and Livelihoods sectors.

4 As mentioned in the CBI TWG's revised ToR: 'sectoral cash and voucher assistance is planned under Shelter/NFI, Food Security, Early Recovery and Livelihoods sectors'. The exact amounts of sectoral cash are, however, not reported.

5 The government response includes more than 15 programmes implemented by the Ministry of Family and Social Services.

6 OCHA transition plan.

7 13th March 2023 is the date that the ToR were finalized and published. The exact revision date remains unknown.

8 CBI TWG. (2023). 'Türkiye Cash-Based Interventions Technical Working Group – Flash Appeal ToRs' and 'Turkey Cash-Based Interventions Technical Working Group ToRs'.

9 IFRC. (2023). 'Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN)'. <https://www.ifrc.org/our-work/disasters-climate-and-crises/cash-and-voucher-assistance/emergency-social-safety-net-essn>

earthquake-affected households, such as those undertaken by the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS).<sup>10</sup> In parallel, new government-driven or aligned programmes were rolled out, such as the Collective Kindness programme, which played a pivotal role in the cash response and cash coordination.

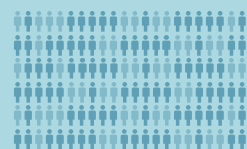
### BOX 1: THE COLLECTIVE KINDNESS PROGRAMME



**The Collective Kindness Programme, implemented by the TRC, WFP and the IFRC is one of the main MPC programmes targeting poor families affected by the earthquake. Collective Kindness is a top-up to a pre-existing Social Safety Net run by the MoFSS.**

IT REACHES

**151,000**  
HOUSEHOLDS



(OUT OF A TOTAL OF 1.2 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS ON THE MOFSS LIST) WHOSE HOMES SUFFERED COMPLETE, HEAVY OR MODERATE DAMAGE.

### STRONG PRE-EXISTING LINKAGES BETWEEN EMERGENCY CVA AND SOCIAL PROTECTION.

For instance, ESSN applications are digitalized and consolidated into a single registry, through which the government of Türkiye can distinguish ESSN applications from other applications for other social assistance programmes.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Key informant interviews. Overall, despite being affected by the earthquake, the first humanitarian responses were led by the Disaster and Emergency Authority (AFAD) and the TRC: see UK Humanitarian Innovation Hub. (2023). 'Solidarity at Scale: Local responder perspectives and learning from the first week of the earthquake response in Syria and Türkiye'.

<sup>11</sup> IFRC. (2023). 'Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN)'. <https://www.ifrc.org/our-work/disasters-climate-and-crises/cash-and-voucher-assistance/emergency-social-safety-net-essn>

## O2

## TO WHAT EXTENT WAS THE CASH COORDINATION EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY?

**This review found a well-organized cash coordination group sharing clear guidance among its partners. Such guidance was decided outside of the CBI TWG by a limited number of actors, namely the government of Türkiye and Collective Kindness implementers. The centralization and external nature of the decision-making reduced the steering space of the CBI TWG on the minimum expenditure basket (MEB), transfer values and targeting of MPC. Overall, non-participatory decision-making was reportedly not detrimental to the quality of the decisions made, but it lacked timeliness.**

### KEY FINDING I

#### CWG EFFECTIVELY PLAYED ITS ROLE IN FOSTERING JOINT ASSESSMENT OF THE FEASIBILITY OF CVA.

The CBI TWG communicated several useful tools on the feasibility of CVA to its partners.<sup>12</sup> These included:

- ▶ An inter-agency guidance note on CVA in gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and response (published 21 February 2023).<sup>13</sup>
- ▶ A cash assistance needs assessment in the context of the earthquake (published 9 March 2023).<sup>14</sup>
- ▶ ‘CBI TWG Guidance on Reporting’, including a 3W matrix and the inter-sector monitoring form (published May 2023).<sup>15</sup> All interviewees considered the 3W matrix useful for coordination.<sup>16</sup>
- ▶ A summary note on financial service providers (FSPs) (published 2 June 2023).<sup>17</sup>

In May 2023, the CBI TWG finalized the data collection process for its own Joint Market Assessment (JMA) which contributed to the assessment of CVA feasibility. The JMA was conducted in a collaborative manner, with CONCERN, Goal, Orange and Sened actively participating in the design of assessment tools.<sup>18</sup> The JMA was published two months later, in July 2023, covering 10 out of 11 provinces.<sup>19</sup> Since then, no regular Joint Market Assessment has been conducted, which reduces the effectiveness of collective decision-making on the continued appropriateness of modality and transfer values.

<sup>12</sup> All publicly available here: [https://data.unhcr.org/en/search?country=&text=&type%5B%5D=news&type%5B%5D=highlight&type%5B%5D=document&type%5B%5D=needs\\_assessment&type%5B%5D=dataviz&partner=&working\\_group=75&sector=&date\\_from=01-02-2023&date\\_to=21-07-2023&uploader=&country\\_json=%7B%220%22%3A%22%22%7D&sector\\_json=%7B%220%22%3A%22%22%7D&apply=](https://data.unhcr.org/en/search?country=&text=&type%5B%5D=news&type%5B%5D=highlight&type%5B%5D=document&type%5B%5D=needs_assessment&type%5B%5D=dataviz&partner=&working_group=75&sector=&date_from=01-02-2023&date_to=21-07-2023&uploader=&country_json=%7B%220%22%3A%22%22%7D&sector_json=%7B%220%22%3A%22%22%7D&apply=)

<sup>13</sup> CBI TWG. (2023). ‘Inter-Agency Guidance Note on Cash-Based Interventions in Gender-Based Violence Risk Mitigation, Prevention, and Response’. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99022>

<sup>14</sup> CBI TWG. (2023). ‘Türkiye: Cash Assistance Needs and Efforts in the Context of the Earthquake Response in Türkiye’. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99424>

<sup>15</sup> CBI TWG. (2023). ‘CBI TWG Guidance on Reporting’.

<sup>16</sup> From the notes from the April bulletin: ‘3W on Activity Info went through a major restructuring to address current information gaps. The updated 3W include data fields such as funding information, donor details, start–end dates of the projects/programmes, district-level data’.

<sup>17</sup> CBI TWG. (2023). ‘CBI TWG – Summary Note on FSPs in Türkiye’. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/101067>

<sup>18</sup> Key informant interviews

<sup>19</sup> CBI TWG. (2023). ‘Joint Market Assessment Report’.

**KEY FINDING 2****CBI TWG SUPPORT TO CVA DESIGN PROVED EFFECTIVE FOR SECTORAL CVA, YET LIMITED FOR MPC, FOR WHICH CBI TWG INFLUENCE AND DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY WERE SECONDARY COMPARED TO THE INFLUENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF TÜRKIYE, TRC, IFRC AND WFP.**

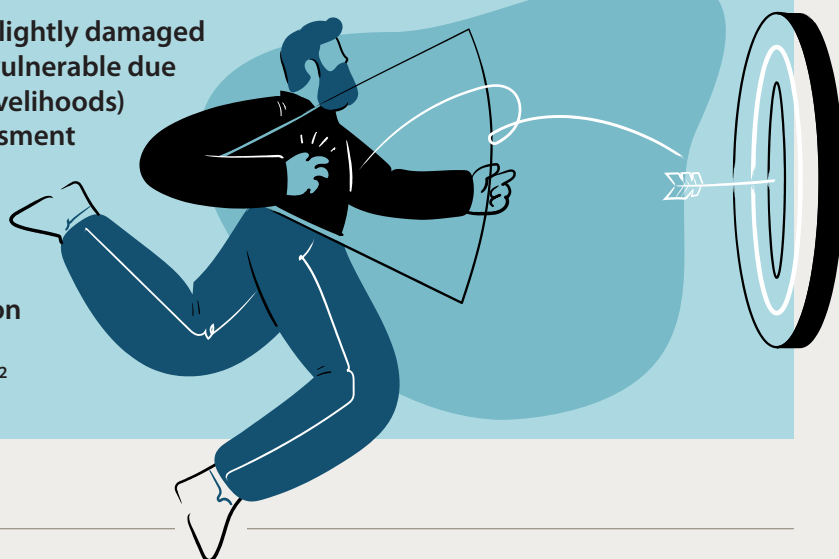
The CBI TWG and its members have had limited influence on the design of the MPC as a result of decision-making being centralized among a few partners responsible for implementing the Collective Kindness programme. Following the recommendations of the TRC, the CWG co-chair and the government of Türkiye, the MEB and the transfer values set by the Collective Kindness programme were adopted to guide the overall MPC response. The CBI TWG's role was limited to the dissemination of information regarding decisions that had been agreed upon by these other actors.<sup>20</sup> Informants consistently emphasized that harmonization was a priority and a key cash coordination objective in Türkiye, which explains why the alignment of the CBI TWG with the Collective Kindness and government initiatives was deemed an effective approach by the co-chairs.

The CBI TWG has benefited from slightly greater technical input into eligibility criteria for MPC targeting. Nevertheless, its strategy remains dependent upon the Collective Kindness programme's targeting scheme.

**BOX 2: TARGETING GUIDANCE PROVIDED BY THE CBI TWG****THE FLASH APPEAL MPC OUGHT TO TARGET:**

- 01** Households whose houses have been demolished or heavily/moderately damaged by the earthquake, **who are on** the MoFSS list and who are not eligible for the Collective Kindness programme (equalling 1.05 million households);
- 02** Households whose houses have been demolished or heavily/moderately damaged by the earthquake and **who have never received** MoFSS assistance (equalling 0.5 million households); and
- 03** Households whose houses were lightly damaged or undamaged but that remain vulnerable due to other conditions (e.g. losing livelihoods) (this requires an individual assessment of vulnerability).<sup>21</sup>

While this was presented as a strategic plan, the CBI TWG recognized that each organization has its own expertise and might approach this differently.<sup>22</sup>



<sup>20</sup> Key informant interviews and desk review; WFP, TRC and IFRC. (2023). 'Minimum Expenditure Basket after the Earthquake Disaster in Türkiye.'

<sup>21</sup> CBI TWG. (2023). 'CBI TWG Meeting Minutes, Targeting.'

<sup>22</sup> Key informant interviews.



## THE CBI TWG ACTIVELY REACHED OUT TO OTHER SECTORS TO SUPPORT THE USE OF CVA THROUGHOUT THE RESPONSE.

It set up an 'inter-sector response monitoring form' to track the use and results of CVA across sectors.<sup>23</sup> The form was to be updated monthly and accessible by all working organizations and sector coordinators. It served tracking and accountability purposes. Additionally, each CBI TWG co-chair was assigned specific sectors and actively participated in the respective cluster meetings throughout the response, providing guidance when needed.<sup>24</sup> As such, they actively steered the transfer value discussion for different sectors, as was successful, for example, for water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

### KEY FINDING 3

## NON-PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING WAS REPORTEDLY NOT DETRIMENTAL TO THE QUALITY OF THE DECISIONS MADE BUT LACKED TIMELINESS.

CBI TWG-led cash coordination was rather slow considering the urgency of the humanitarian needs, reportedly because of the complexity of the overall coordination structure. Revised ToRs were published in March 2023, a week after the overall architecture was finalized. Meeting minutes were published online later in April, although reportedly shared internally with CBI TWG members after each meeting, and joint market monitoring was made available in July.

Several CBI TWG members mentioned that guidance on CVA was shared at a rather slow pace, given that there were only a small number of actors involved in the design of the MPC. For instance, the MEB was finalized in June 2023, four months after the earthquake, and has not been updated since. Additionally, the MPC guidance referred to in the April 2023 meeting minutes<sup>25</sup> has not yet been published.

## 03

## TO WHAT EXTENT WAS THE CASH COORDINATION INCLUSIVE, TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE?

**The cash response and coordination were locally driven, with strong government and TRC involvement. The cash coordination, however, lacked inclusivity and transparency. While there are strong linkages between the earthquake cash response and social protection mechanisms, the role of the CBI TWG to create these linkages remains unclear.**

### KEY FINDING 4

## THE CASH RESPONSE WAS LOCALLY-LED, AND MOSTLY LOCALLY COORDINATED BY A HANDFUL OF ORGANIZATIONS. THERE WAS LIMITED PARTICIPATION AND LIMITED SPACE FOR DECISION-MAKING BY LOCAL ACTORS.

Cash response was locally driven, while national actors played a strong role in cash coordination, either through their role in the CBI TWG or in the Collective Kindness programme. Moreover, the placement of TRC as co-chair of the CBI TWG can be interpreted as a powerful representation of the inclusivity of local

<sup>23</sup> CBI TWG. (2023). 'CBI TWG Guidance on Reporting.'

<sup>24</sup> Examples include discussions around a package for WASH transfer value. Their support was also extended to other sectors such as Cash for Work initiatives, the Early Recovery sector, and Food Security and Livelihoods programmes.

<sup>25</sup> CBI TWG Minutes 13th April 2023.

actors. However, the review found that, although the CBI TWG was co-chaired by a local organization, this did not necessarily translate into more space for local actors to be involved in the decision-making within the CBI TWG. The inclusion of local actors in the CBI TWG seems to have been limited to an observatory role, as reported by key informants.

Key informants reported the CBI TWG meetings to be open to all. Participation data collected on CBI TWG meeting attendance shows that 30% of organizations participating in the CBI TWG are local (Turkish or Syrian), while 70% are international. Two interviewees pointed out that local organizations – besides TRC or local government bodies – were less present in the response than international ones due to lesser financing and lesser capacities. Further, CBI TWG meetings were held in English, which remains a barrier to inclusivity. The Disaster and Emergency Authority (AFAD, the main governmental agency in charge of coordinating the response) was absent in CBI TWG meetings. Some informants reported experiencing a language barrier, while others reported an overall limited inclusion of AFAD at sector level, as AFAD was rather included at inter-sector level. As reported by the CBI TWG, they would not have been able to establish links with AFAD by themselves, as they did not have direct authority to reach out to any government agencies, and it was noted that this was the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA's) responsibility to coordinate.

CWG participants reported the desire for greater participation in decision-making (e.g., on targeting guidance), with the Joint Market Assessment presented as a good example of collaboration, as mentioned above. Local organizations were present and welcome in meetings, but the extent of their participation and involvement in decision-making seems to have been limited, as decision-making power sits among a few actors.<sup>26</sup>

The opportunities for meaningful dialogue with government actors were limited. Coordination with AFAD, for example, was perceived to have been challenging, resulting in occasional operational delays.<sup>27</sup> Government representatives' irregular attendance at meetings further compounded the issue. Only some participated in CVA training, which was interpreted by one key informant as indicative of the importance of enhancing technical understanding between the group and government representatives.<sup>28</sup>

## KEY FINDING 5

### THERE ARE STRONG LINKAGES BETWEEN THE EARTHQUAKE CASH RESPONSE AND SOCIAL PROTECTION MECHANISMS. THE CBI TWG SUPPORTED THESE LINKAGES BUT DID NOT CREATE THEM.

There have been strong connections between pre-existing social protection initiatives and cash earthquake response programmes, as was particularly evident between Collective Kindness targeting and MoFSS programmes. A unified registration system for recipients, and the alignment of transfer values and targeting modalities, helped to coordinate the integration of these programmes. This successful coordination can be attributed to the extensive role played by TRC throughout the response, across all these initiatives. These linkages were therefore coordinated and driven, firstly, by TRC and its partners, and then supported by CBI TWG guidance.

<sup>26</sup> Key informant interviews.

<sup>27</sup> Key informant interviews.

<sup>28</sup> Key informant interviews.

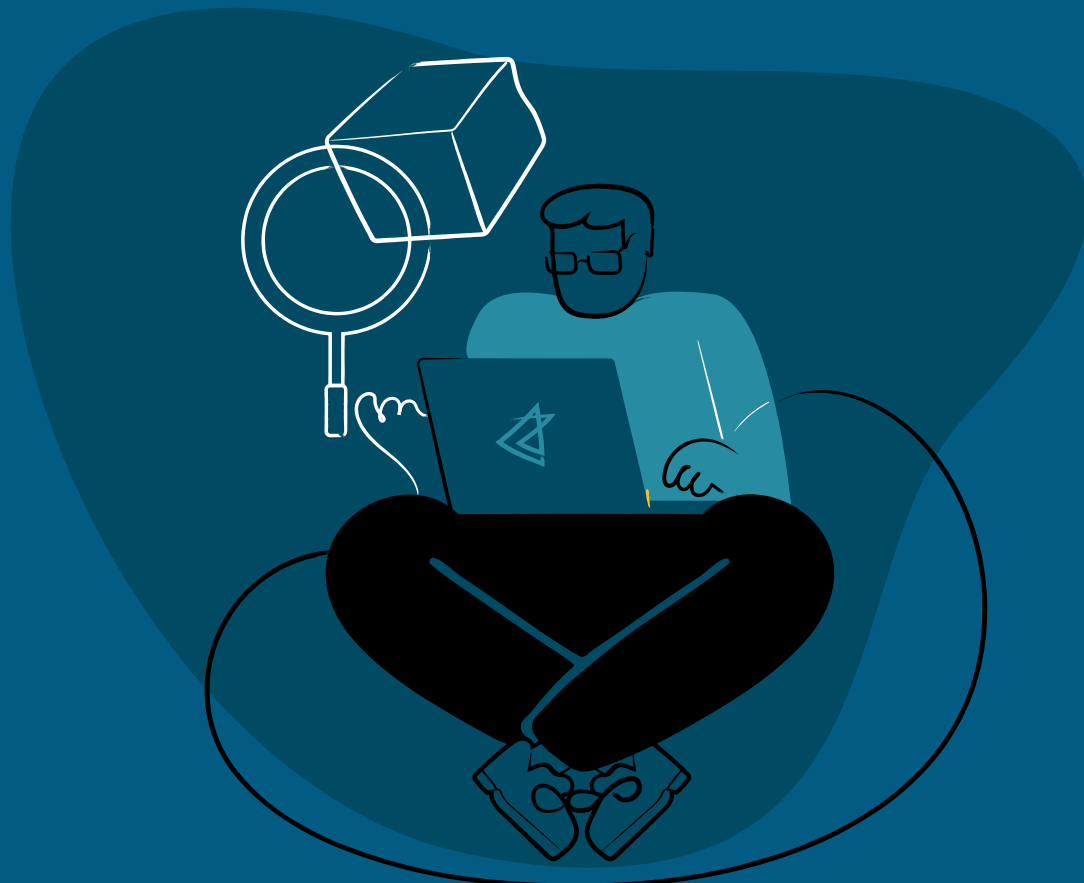
## 04 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

**Cash coordination of the earthquake response in Türkiye prompts a broader reflection on the role of the CWG/CBI TWG in cash coordination in contexts where government presence is strong and assistance mechanisms are already in place and functioning.**

The successful collaboration among various stakeholders played a pivotal role in shaping the cash response to the earthquake in Türkiye. The cash response and coordination were locally driven, with strong government and TRC involvement, alongside UNHCR leadership. The inclusivity and transparency of the cash coordination, however, could be improved. The shortcomings in this respect had a significant impact on the decision-making autonomy of the CBI TWG, which subsequently affected some aspects of the effectiveness, timeliness, inclusiveness and transparency of the group's cash coordination efforts.

Overall, **improvements to the CBI TWG's agility, or ability to swiftly adapt to contextual changes, could improve its effectiveness.** This could include the establishment of specialized task teams with diverse expertise, facilitating specific response strategies (e.g., timely update of the JMA).

**The integration of local experts** with a deep understanding of legal frameworks and context-specific nuances in the CBI TWG structures could enhance collaboration with governmental actors. The ongoing implementation of bilingual resources within the CBI TWG infrastructure also has the potential to improve the inclusion of local stakeholders in cash coordination processes, while also serving as an incentive for government counterparts to actively engage in dialogue.



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