



REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE LEADS AND CO-LEADS OF THE WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICAN CASH WORKING GROUPS (CWG)

Place: Action Against Hunger regional office in Dakar – SN

Date: May 13 – 15, 2024 (9H-17H GMT)

Participants: 35 including 12 women (Day 1)
34 including 11 women (Day 2)
38 including 12 women (Day 3)

Organizations: OCHA, CALP Network, national CWGs represented by Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad and Togo. CARE USA, WFP, Concern Worldwide, CashCap, FAO, Action against Hunger, NRC, ECHO, USAID/BHA, Niger Ministry of Humanitarian Action and Disaster Management (MAH/GC), Mercy Corps, UNICEF, UNHCR, IRC, DRC, IOM, FCDO, British Red-Cross UN Women, CRS, UNDCO, Sahel Regional Fund and the Billital Maroobè Network.

Introduction

The meeting of West and Central African Cash Working Group (CWG) leads and co-leads was held in Dakar, Senegal, from May 13 to 15. The meeting is part of the support provided by the regional CWG and CALP Network to the region's national CWGs. It has been organized by CALP and the OCHA Regional Office, with financial support from the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA/USAID). The specific objectives of the meeting were:

- Help improve coordination at regional and country level
- Support national CWGs for a better transition process.
- Strengthen synergy and networking between CWGs around key regional trends.

The meeting was attended by nine of the region's eleven active CWGs, with 17 participants from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Togo. There were also several participants from Dakar-based organizations, donors and regional focal points for cash and voucher assistance (CVA) as contributors to the various sessions.

Day 1

1. Opening session

The meeting was opened by CALP, who recalled the points of discussion and exchange from the previous meeting of leads and co-leads, and addressed the current regional context, marked by a very complex regional context, growing humanitarian needs and problems of acceptance of CVA in certain countries, as illustrated by the CVA ban which has been in place in Burkina Faso for over a year and a half now. The cash ban could also be introduced in several other countries.

During this meeting, several sessions and working groups were planned to deal with CVA and gender, to analyse the functioning of CWGs and see how to better support them, to give an overview of certain negotiation techniques that could be used by CWGs, to exchange on strengthening the links between social protection and CVA and to discuss the priorities and challenges of CWGs with certain donors.

2. The State of the World's Cash 2023 / CALP Network

This CALP report is the first of the meeting's presentations and critically analyses humanitarian CVA on a global scale. Through this collaboratively designed exercise, over a thousand responses were collected from a wide range of stakeholders, and nine themes were addressed to reinforce good CVA practice and highlight the data collected.

Some of these themes will be explored in more detail in upcoming presentations, including coordination, local response, social protection, and data processing and digitization.

The key findings of this report show that:

- The use of cash & voucher assistance has increased, the quality has improved, but there is still a long way to go.
- A constant adjustment is required: needs change and perspectives evolve.
- There are structural constraints: greater systems change is needed for cash transfers to reach their full potential.

This report also highlights the fact that CVAs remain the modality of choice for most people in crisis. The volume of aid in the form of CVAs has certainly increased but could potentially rise from today's 21% to 30-50% of total humanitarian aid, if CVAs were used systematically where relevant and feasible.

As a recommendation, all stakeholders should collaborate, across organizations, sectors and responses, to exploit opportunities to increase the use of CVAs where possible and appropriate.

The full report is available in English on the CALP page, and the summarized version of the report is available in French under the following link:

<https://www.calpnetwork.org/fr/collection/the-state-of-the-worlds-cash-2023-report/>

3. Regional Cash and Voucher Assistance Dashboard Development Process / Nafissatou Pouye - OCHA

OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data is responsible for managing the Humanitarian Data Exchange platform, commonly known as HDX. Launched in 2014, The aim of the HDX platform is to facilitate the retrieval and use of humanitarian data for analysis. The platform contains data grids from 22 countries with a humanitarian response plan.

However, in relation to the CVA modality, it was not until 2019, at the request of the CALP Network, that the HDX team developed a dashboard for monitoring cash transfers in West and Central Africa. This dashboard was developed thanks to the national CWGs and aims to track and identify trends in CVA activities in the region.

The purpose of this presentation is to find the most appropriate way of reintegrating this page dedicated to CWGs, as it has been deactivated for some time due to a lack of commitment.

To help CWGs make the most of this tool, the HDX centre recommends:

- Coordinate an in-depth dialogue with the countries concerned to identify their specific needs in terms of activity monitoring.
- Establish a schedule for regular data updates, in consultation with national CWGs, to ensure that information is up to date and relevant.
- Identify the types of data essential for the dashboard.

4. Genre and CVA / Patrick N Kountchou - CARE and Sabine Woube - UN Women

This session, facilitated by CARE and UN Women, began with a discussion of measures planned or underway to integrate gender into the CVA agenda of CWGs.

This discussion generated a great deal of interest, and several experiences were cited, ranging from the recruitment of women in both programming and operational cash activities, to the obligation of donors to integrate gender into project design, to the implementation of an institutional strategy for the promotion of gender.

Complementing CARE's presentation, the UN Women representative highlighted the following priority areas of action contributing to the promotion of equality between men and women:

- Analysis, design and implementation.
- Financial resources.

- Learning and monitoring, evaluation and accountability.
- Participation and leadership.
- Human resources.
- Capacity building.

The majority of CWG representatives were in favour of strengthening the gender aspect of working group agendas, while acknowledging contextual and cultural aspects. In this respect, the DRC was cited as an example of the need to take gender-related protection concerns into account, particularly when fundraising.

The focus of this presentation is to dispel some of the myths surrounding the issue of gender and CVA, as well as to present the resources developed by CARE in relation to gender:

- Online course developed with Key Aid Consulting and the global protection cluster on "Cash & Voucher Assistance and Gender-Based Violence Online Training".
- A "Gender and Cash Transfers" toolkit.
- A gender sensitivity indicator for projects integrating cash and voucher assistance with CALP.
- A Micro-learning tool on "Gender and Cash & Voucher Assistance".

During the session, a poll was taken among the participants with the help of SLIDO and here are the following results:

- "Do you think your CWG has a good gender balance?" 56% answered no.
- "In your CWG, how many women participate regularly in meetings and/or working groups?" 39% answered that there were none or very few.
- "Do you think you could have more female participation in the work of your CWG?" 84% answered yes.

Overall, it emerged that female participation in the meetings and activities of CWGs could and should be encouraged by CWGs.

5. Operation of the CWGs

The session's aim was to take a closer look at progress in the transition to the new coordination model, and to help identify CWGs' needs and expectations. The session was conducted in four stages:

1. CWG operations survey results / Abdoulaye Hamidou, Deputy Regional Representative - CALP Network and Lionel B. Ouedraogo, FAO Regional Advisor

- Of the eleven active CWGs in the region, seven (64%) took part in the survey.
- Regarding the organization of CWGs, it is surprising that very few of them have the terms of reference for the new coordination model. Nevertheless, three CWGs have successfully made the transition to this new model.
- A satisfactory representation of all stakeholders is observed in CWG activities, although financial service providers (FSPs) are not very present.
- The thematic sub-groups with the highest participation rates focus on the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) process and market monitoring.
- In terms of needs assessment, there has been a strengthening of members' capacities, followed by a comprehensive assessment of humanitarian needs and their feasibility.
- The main initiatives taken in terms of technical support focus on how to include CVA in HNO /HRP processes, the mapping of providers and the promotion of tools.
- Regarding information management, although the majority of CWGs develop and disseminate updates through 3/4/5W and have an archiving plan, only one CWG (DRC) has put in place a formal handover plan.
- A list of CWG successes and challenges is available on the slides.

2. CWG expectations towards Cash Advisory Group (CAG)

First, there was the online presentation by Juliet Lang, Humanitarian Affairs and CVA Coordinator at OCHA headquarters, focusing on:

- Composition of the CAG.
- Conditions for a smooth transition such as engagement with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the presence of at least one programmatic and one non-programmatic coordinator - Linkages with sectors and clusters/working groups and ICCGs etc.
- Guidance on CWG roles and responsibilities.
- Coordination in the context of Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPC/MPCA) and humanitarian needs.
- Humanitarian coordination architecture clearly defines the position and responsibility of the CWG and sub-clusters within cross-sector coordination.

This session, led by Juliet Lang, completed the session on CWG operations. It helped clarify the CAG's responsibilities about the CWGs' expectations. It also explained the separation of roles and responsibilities within the coordination teams.

CWGs have a two-fold mandate:

- They act as technical bodies providing support and guidance to members.
- CWGs also represent multi-sectoral forums (without legitimacy, given that this is more of an inter-sectoral issue under the humanitarian architecture).

In the area of collaboration/articulation with national sub-working groups, the IASC coordination model does not necessarily apply, and accountability to the national structure is functional or direct in the absence of sub-national inter-cluster coordination mechanisms.

3. Lessons learned from CWGs that have completed the transition to the new coordination model

- **DRC example:**
 - Transition model adopted by the national CWG starting September 2023.
 - Development of a roadmap following an assessment of what has been done and what is expected.
 - Clarification of roles and responsibilities within the coordination team.
 - Consultation with CALP members on programmatic issues.
 - The biggest challenge is to work with the constituents of the national CWG (sub-national CWGs).
 - Launch of an advisory group with the participation of the World Bank.
- **Mali example:**
 - Need to know the context (refugee, non-refugee, IASC or mixed)
 - In terms of funding, establish a strategy and action plan for the years 2024 - 2025.
 - Implementation of the transition plan began in April 2023 and ended in November 2023.
 - Development of a monitoring framework based on the 4 pillars of the CAG.
 - Report presented to CWG and clusters.
- **Cameroon example:**
 - Transition completed in March 2024.
 - In terms of funding, agencies or the government contribute according to the results of the feasibility study for each crisis.
 - Establishment of a roadmap with room for manoeuvre.
 - Collaboration with the CALP on a model of the terms of reference.

- Working retreat organized in November 2023 with all members of the national CWG, local organizations, and sub-national CWGs to develop criteria and plan elections for co-chair positions within the national CWG.
- Adoption of a work plan during the working retreat.

4. Results of group work on CWG challenges and recommendations to the CAG for transition to the new coordination model (the restitution of this work was presented on day 2)

Challenges:

- o Coordination of CVAs in line with the new model.
- o The ban on CVA in certain regions.
- o Lack of trust on the part of authorities regarding CVAs and humanitarian actors, especially in conflict zones.
- o The absence of a consensus database hinders the possibility of a joint and coordinated response involving all stakeholders.
- o Limited human and financial resources for the CWG.
- o Requirements imposed by the authorities on the way CVAs are delivered, which may conflict with humanitarian principles.

Recommendations:

- o Harmonized transfer values.
- o Concise term of reference stipulating the roles and responsibilities of CWGs.
- o Alignment of social protection with humanitarian CVAs.
- o An effective division of tasks between programmatic and non-programmatic leads
- o More financial resources should be allocated to staffing needs by placing CWGs between ICCs and clusters.
- o Use of social register data or a database validated by all parties.
- o Stronger advocacy between authorities and humanitarian actors for the promotion of CVA.
- o Improved quality of targeting through the harmonization of an agreed MEB.

Day 2

5. Locally led cash and voucher assistance / Mirko Tommasi – Regional representative CALP and Hortense Sombie - British Red Cross

Much progress has been made in implementing CVA policy commitments, but progress in localization is not keeping pace, hence the need to discuss the state of the local response.

Obstacles to CVA progress at the local level reflect problems intrinsic to the system, and so discussions need to be initiated to facilitate the decentralization of aid implementers and the adoption of new approaches.

In conclusion, the working group session featured constructive exchanges and the following points were highlighted:

- **Challenges of localization**

Resources - Limited technical, financial and institutional capacities among local players.

Humanitarian coordination architecture - Weak inclusion of local players in the humanitarian programme cycle, poor access to funding.

Capacity building - No assessment of local expertise. Lack of CVA experience among local NGOs.

Political - Political context hostile to civil society organization.

Management problems - Increased risk of fraud.

Leadership - Governance problems.

- **Action plan for local players**

Financial support to ensure retention of human resources and support in terms of infrastructure and institutionalization.

Networking of local organizations and sharing of information on best practices.

Technical capacity building.

Advocacy on behalf of local NGOs with donors.

Scale-up of local NGO activities.

Participation of local NGOs in **regional consultations** on MPCA.

Development of tools (SOP and support for contracts related to FSP).

6. Reflection on cash and voucher assistance bans in the region - CashCap/OCHA and CALP

The session began with an introduction to the context of the CVA bans in the region by the regional representative of CALP, followed by a presentation of the Burkina Faso case by Sani Dan Aoudé, co-lead of the national CWG, and finally by a brainstorming session by the working groups.

It's impossible to talk about the situation of CVA aid in the region without mentioning the obvious: the suspension of CVA in certain areas of the region.

To halt this trend and re-establish this form of assistance before the ban became more widespread, CALP worked closely with the CWGs to draw up a map aimed at officially and unofficially collecting the reasons given for these so-called suspensions.

Following this data collection, a consultancy to be launched shortly will carry out an in-depth analysis of the issues raised, interviewing CVA players and local authorities to mitigate the ban and formulate recommendations.

In the case of Burkina Faso, which has been facing the suspension of CVAs in several regions since the beginning of 2023, the reasons cited are multiple and include political and social considerations, market disruptions, a lack of trust on the part of local authorities, logistical and security issues, targeting issues and the fact that the amount of aid is too high in relation to the minimum wage of non-recipients to name but a few.

According to discussions held between the BF CWG and the authorities, the only alternative for the time being is "Cash for Work", although in-kind distribution as well as vouchers may still be debatable.

From the contributions received, it would be wise to focus:

- On the aspects that work best, rather than continuing to re-establish CVAs after a long period of waiting while assistance is needed for the 2.4 million IDPs.
- Helping both host populations and IDPs in terms of assistance to avoid tensions.

Restitution of group work on possible mitigations against the CVA ban

How can we reduce the risk of more bans in other regions/countries?

- Emphasize that cooperation with the government on social safety nets reinforces its legitimacy, not the other way around.
- Establish open communication with the government in terms of policy and strategy and keep them informed of humanitarian activities.
- Share targeting results - follow up on discussions and feedback - Share assistance impact results.
- Discuss complementarity - prevent duplication.
- Learn about government strategy from development actors.
- Emphasize that working with the government on social safety nets strengthens its leadership, not the other way around.
- Promote transparency with the authorities to avoid misunderstandings.
- Depending on the context, use local council lists as the basis for targeting.

How can cash and voucher assistance programs be adapted when a ban has been introduced by the authorities?

- Training and raising the awareness of the authorities.

- Training and raising awareness of humanitarian actors vis-à-vis the authorities.
- Discussion of geographical entry points - and respecting the delimitation of government red zones.
- Change of assistance modalities by opting for vouchers or assistance in kind.
- Resilience plan for beneficiary communities aligned with government program.
- Detailed impact monitoring and sharing with the government, including long-term impact.
- Post-monitoring of programme implementation with OCHA.

7. Humanitarian negotiation - Christelle Huré, Regional Advocacy, Media and Communications Manager - NRC and CALP

- **Context:** Most humanitarian workers are involved in negotiations for humanitarian access and protection at very different levels. The acquisition of basic methods and skills will enable field workers to prepare and conduct humanitarian negotiations.
- **Objectives:**
 - Use ethical communication tools and influence techniques
 - Interact effectively with difficult interlocutors
 - Overcome dilemmas as part of a team
 - Lead or advise on bilateral or coordinated negotiations
 - Use effective resources for humanitarian mediation
 - Main clause: No interference with governments, and negotiation only takes place when authorized by the state.
- **Relevance:** Following the presentation by the Norwegian Refugee Council, it was timely to discuss the relevance of this topic with leads and co-leads. Faced with the emergence and escalation of numerous conflicts, some felt that humanitarian diplomacy should support local agencies and organizations on what to do and what not to do. The responses received were instructive, however, with some feeling that this is an area that should only be dealt with by experts.
- **Resource sharing:** planned online on the NRC website - E-Learning available on humanitarian principles and humanitarian negotiation. CWG leads and co-leads will be able to take part in training sessions on humanitarian negotiation when sessions are organized in different countries.

Day 3

8. Open discussions with donors (DG ECHO, USAID/BHA and FCDO)

This session was facilitated by Bindal Güner (DRC CWG co-lead) and Djibril Njoya (Mali CWG co-lead). The two co-facilitators organized a consultation among the participants of all CWGs to present points that took into consideration all the different concerns and challenges of the various countries. The three donors present were: BHA, ECHO and FCDO. The presentation was structured around five points, namely:

- i. Financing of coordination team positions dedicated entirely to coordination portfolio and impact of CVA use on the humanitarian system).
- ii. Donor support for the use of CVA as an assistance modality.
- iii. Donor support for funding CWG activities.
- iv. Donor support for implementation of the new CWG coordination model.
- v. Donor support for discussions on early action and cash and voucher assistance.

In their presentation, the CWGs highlighted several expectations of donors and There are three possible sources of funding with DGECHO: HIP, DIPECHO and ERC. HIP is the priority tool for

humanitarian response, with the possibility of top-ups (budget adjustments) during the year. Lead and co-lead positions can be financed through a partner to reinforce coordination, although this remains minimal. DIPECHO, representing around 12% of the initial budget, offers more possibilities for coordination, but these remain limited. The Enhanced Response Capacity (ERC) global call, which is more recent and used primarily to strengthen logistical and other capacities, could also be used to finance the strengthening of coordination.

Preparedness is part of ECHO's policy, so there is scope for funding preparedness activities. When a need for coordination reinforcement is expressed, the relevant CWG and/or CALP can be the intermediaries for the funding request.

The programmatic partnership with OCHA is "bookmarked", which means that ECHO cannot propose that this funding be used for specific CWG positions or activities. Partners are responsible for funding and ECHO does not micromanage.

ECHO aims to reach 35% of humanitarian funds used for cash and voucher assistance. Although ECHO is in favor of cash and voucher assistance, it is ultimately up to the partner to decide which modality to use and justify why when CVAs are not used. Today, there are very few ECHO partners who do not use cash and voucher assistance, although some use it less than others. CWGs asked for support for their advocacy efforts.

Operational expectations:

- Secure long-term funding for leads, co-leads and information management (IM).
- How to fund CWG activities?
- Respect CWG recommendations, including transfer values and minimum expenditure baskets (MEBs).
- Report regularly to CWGs.
- Encourage innovation and support using emerging technologies.
- Maintain operational flexibility regarding the modalities used.

Advocacy:

- Assist CWGs in advocating the use of CVAs with line ministries, governments, Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs), and other donors.
- Act as a bridge between CWGs and social protection actors.
- Dedicate a percentage of the budget to CVAs; this facilitates strategic discussions.
- Fund studies and research on targeting, side effects, effectiveness and efficiency.
- Ask clusters to support CWGs in operational guidelines.

The three donors in turn gave elements of answers to questions raised by the CWGs.

ECHO

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BHA

Generally, coordination support is at the regional level, but at the national level, BHA may consider funding through proposals with partners. If the CWG wishes to access BHA funding, it must collaborate with partners during the proposal submission period. Once all proposals have been validated and funded, it becomes difficult to add costs for CWG activities.

BHA takes a neutral approach to cash and voucher assistance (CVA) or non-food items (NFI). Its priority is to leave flexibility to partners.

BHA is interested in supporting a standardized approach, in line with coordination activities. For the region, BHA has seen an increase in funding in recent years and remains optimistic, although forecasts are difficult to make.

It is policy not to do bookmarking, to leave autonomy to OCHA. If CWGs have a specific need, they should approach BHA's technical assistants and discuss it.

FCDO

FCDO has a strategy oriented towards the use of cash and voucher assistance, but always asks for details justifying why this modality is preferred. The coordination of cash transfers (CVA) should prioritize the prevention of situations like the one in Burkina Faso, where cash transfers have been suspended.

According to the FCDO technical assistant, it is important not to focus solely on technical aspects, such as the MEB (Minimum Expenditure Basket), but to be able to adapt interventions by considering different contextual aspects.

Coordination posts should generally be funded by the agencies responsible. For the central Sahel, the Fonds Régional du Sahel manages FCDO funds. At national level, FCDO is interested in exchanges with CWGs (Cash Working Groups) and needs to receive data.

Concerning the financing of CWG activities, the CWG can exchange with FCDO to see how certain activities could be integrated into a partner's financing. FCDO can be contacted for exchanges at national level. If the CWG encounters difficulties in collecting data from partners, donors can discreetly provide assistance.

9. Linking humanitarian cash and voucher assistance to social protection programs by Céline Sinitzky, Technical Advisor - CALP; Paul Quarles Van Ufford, Regional Social Policy Advisor - UNICEF and Anna Ocampo – WFP

This session began with a survey to gain an insight into how humanitarian and development actors work together to meet the needs and rights of populations. These questions focused on frequency, coordination, and the possibility of establishing links, and if so, which ones.

The survey was followed by a presentation by Céline Sinitzky from CALP on the Social Protection chapter of the latest SOWC 2023 report. According to this report on the global status of cash transfers published in 2023, progress has been made in approaches to linking CVA and social protection, not least due to the acceleration of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). This linkage should encompass a variety of contexts, from stable, well-organized states to contexts favoured by development and social protection actors, as well as conflict zones and fragile states, with which humanitarians are very familiar.

To this end, there are several possible links between SP and humanitarian aid, depending on the context and even in conflict zones. The main obstacles to progress include the limited technical capabilities of staff (both humanitarians and SP agents), the lack of coordination between actors, and the limits of data and systems interoperability between governments and humanitarian organizations. Given that approaches to linking CVAs and social protection vary considerably according to context, the SOWC 2023 report also outlines priority social protection-focused actions involving all stakeholders and responses to be led locally.

The CALP presentation was complemented by a presentation of the "Twin Track" program, a joint social protection project in the Sahel run by the WFP and UNICEF, followed by a question-and-answer session led by their respective representatives.

This section addresses the role of SP in emergency or humanitarian responses, the different interactions between humanitarian and SP actors, and the complementary role that humanitarian actors can play in terms of support, know-how, tools and innovation.

To strengthen the resilience of poor and vulnerable households, rather than simply responding to shocks, another aspect of social protection was highlighted: adaptive social protection. This was an opportunity to get an overview of the Sahel Joint Social Protection Project, a two-track approach aimed at increasing the coverage of SP interventions when national systems lack the capacity to provide a rapid response in a structural way. In this approach, the government provides leadership and both tracks are guided by government leaders, and in some contexts, partners support or pilot the implementation of CVAs.

This support to national governments in the implementation of CVAs is structured around three points:

- **Cash and voucher assistance and complementary services.**
- **Systems strengthening.**
- **Knowledge, evidence and learning.**

Recommendations from the experience-sharing session

- Improved use of the social register (examining the nuances of poverty and vulnerability as defined by humanitarian organizations versus government lists).
- Government accountability to populations by providing quality social protection programs.
- Inclusion of national organizations and civil society through technical and financial reinforcement.
- Better coordination of resources.
Pooling the resources of humanitarian actors, especially to deliver a harmonized targeting tool to counteract duplication.

10. Regional Humanitarian Funds

The aim of this session was to introduce the Regional Humanitarian Fund for West and Central Africa (FHRAOC) to the CWGs, with a view to fostering potential collaborations or synergies.

FHRAOC seeks to bring the benefits of pooled funding to new and under-covered regions in West and Central Africa, notably Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Niger and Chad. It aims to add value in a region of interconnected challenges, by supporting the humanitarian response in each country and prioritizing urgent needs, while fostering regional coordination and synergies.

The fund is active in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, and is currently being set up in Cameroon. Cash and voucher assistance, as well as localization, are priorities for the Fund, with a desire to increase, where feasible, the use of cash-based programs to enhance the dignity and choice of those assisted.

Percentage use of funds with cash and voucher assistance:

- In 2021 - In Niger, only 3% of an envelope of \$12.5 million was used for cash and voucher assistance.
- In 2022 - In Niger & Burkina, only 7% of a \$38.5 million envelope was used for cash and voucher assistance.

- In 2023 - Niger, Burkina & Mali out of an envelope of \$36.5M, only 3% was used for cash transfers (the decrease was due to cash bans in Burkina).

The risk of an expansion of bans on the use of cash and voucher assistance to other countries was highlighted as a potential problem.

The fund is managed at regional level, with priorities defined by the regional office in consultation with the country offices concerned. As an example of positive collaboration, Olivier cited the work done in collaboration with the Burkina CWG and Rukie Uysal, CashCap, who had supported the CWG.

Olivier also proposed further discussions to see how CWGs could play an even greater role in supporting partners wishing to apply to FHRAOC, to ensure that cash and voucher assistance takes a significant place in the fund.

A possible collaboration could be the definition of a one- or two-page document to accompany the OCHA office in the selection of proposals containing cash and voucher assistance components. Training in cash and voucher assistance for OCHA staff involved in managing the fund.

How can the CWGs be better involved in discussions on regional humanitarian fund strategy and in the evaluation of proposals? This question remains to be explored, given the CWG's limited resources and time.

Key recommendations of the meeting

1. Support CWGs in the transition process to the new CVA coordination system.
2. Accelerate the implementation of the localization agenda, notably through capacity-building for local organizations and state actors, their involvement from the planning stage of the humanitarian response, and the diversification of forums for exchange with these actors.
3. The CWGs should continue to strengthen the links between social protection and humanitarians, in line with the specific recommendations that emerged from the session. At regional level, CALP will continue to collaborate with the regional platform for social protection to identify specific actions to support in certain countries.
4. Continue to raise awareness of cross-cutting issues (gender, training and resources on humanitarian negotiation, etc.), to ensure that they are better understood and taken in full account.
5. In the context of a possible expansion of bans on the use of CVAs, CWGs should strengthen exchanges with the various authorities to understand possible reluctance and find solutions adapted to different contexts. If a new ban is introduced, the CWG should work to see how to adapt CVA programs in a manner consistent with the flexibility that the modality offers and the characteristics of the specific context.
6. Strengthen advocacy with authorities and humanitarian actors to promote cash and voucher assistance in the region, given the high risk of a ban.
7. Follow up with interested CWGs to revive the regional CVA dashboard.
8. CALP will follow up with NRC and country Access Working Groups (AWGs) to see if there is an opportunity to involve CWGs in the negotiation training sessions to be organized at country level.
9. CWGs should approach donors at country level to discuss the possibility of obtaining funding to support certain CWG activities. This could be done by adding lines in funded proposals to certain CWG partners. CALP, for its part, will follow up to encourage CWGs to do so.
10. CWGs should establish fluid communication with donors in an effort to share more information and to involve them in advocacy and sensitize partners to participate in CWG work.