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CashCap

Case Study: Country mission to South Sudan

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When CashCap expert Rabeea Ahmed arrived in South Sudan in 2018, she knew she had a challenge on her hands. “There was zero confidence in the South Sudan Cash Working Group when I arrived,” she says.

After years of conflict, with many millions of people displaced, South Sudan was one of the most challenging, protracted and complex humanitarian emergencies in the world. Added into this was the fact that agencies had conflicting interests, stakeholders didn't engage or trust the Cash Working Group, and there was no effective joint monitoring.

But the Group had taken the first step to improve their response - calling in a CashCap expert. “There were so many expectations that a CashCapper might be able to work miracles,” says Rabeea. “But simultaneously there was also apprehension and people were passive to engage with the Cash Working Group.”

Independent of agency-specific agendas

Since 2016, CashCap has been providing humanitarian and development agencies with a diverse range of technical, coordination, and capacity development support across all stages of a crisis response.

Because of CashCap's unique position as an interlocutor between multiple agencies and actors, our experts are able to act as a neutral force in potentially tricky and political spaces, equipped to



Front cover and above photos: South Sudanese camp for people displaced by conflict. Credit: Rikka Tupaz/IOM South Sudan 2018

navigate agency agendas. This was key in South Sudan where Rabeea recognised the first step was to iron out disagreements: “We had to align the group with interagency interests, rather than organisational interests.” says Rabeea. “For me it was a semi-political and diplomatic mission.”

A key challenge was balancing the power dynamics and ensuring the voices of national NGOs in particular got heard at the table dominated by bigger multilateral players. Able to play an impartial role, independent of agency agendas, Rabeea also managed to establish the Cash Working Group as an influential player. “It was all part of the consultation process at the start to get acknowledgement and set the scene,” says Rabeea.

The Cash Working Group was asked to take part in the Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan consultations, peer review for Clusters and even the pitch to the Humanitarian Coordinator. Cash was included in the Humanitarian Response Plan for the first time. Next, growing confidence from donors led to the Cash Working Group being asked to review funding proposals for Cluster Partners. Finally, cash was starting to be built into the humanitarian architecture in a cohesive, comprehensive way that would best meet the needs of the South Sudanese people.

“The coordination aspect within the Cash Working Group by the CashCap expert has also brought all the stakeholders involved in the CVA together, hence better understanding of the CVA.” Peter Mewar, Concern

Putting the minimum in place

One of the most important pieces of work was agreeing on the survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB) - the amount of money a household needs to survive. “Although there was a SMEB in place, people weren’t in agreement with what it was or how to go about it,” says Rabeea. “We had to conduct a thorough consultative process for setting up the SMEB with corresponding transfer values and simultaneously had to get everyone in agreement on the monitoring process [for the SMEB].” With everyone working together and on the same page, the Cash Working Group was able to facilitate more effective and quality cash and markets programming by launching the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) - an interactive tool that monitors marketplaces across South Sudan on a monthly basis.



CashCap expert Rabeea Ahmed

The importance of these mechanisms can’t be overstated: “Every time any organisation has to design a programme or implement any type of cash activity, the first port of call is the SMEB and JMMI.” Widely used in South Sudan, now when any organisation plans their programming, they go check the JMMI and can plan a more relevant, effective response. As an ongoing testament to its usefulness, the JMMI is recognised and quoted in CVA discussions in the humanitarian community across the world.

Cash in the time of Covid-19

Now the South Sudan Cash Working Group not only has a seat at the table, but it is “one of the important groups in humanitarian architecture,” according to Ali Mansoor, who replaced Rabeea as the CashCap expert in 2019. “There are five to six clusters currently planning and implementing cash when before there were only three,” says Ali. “It has been recognised by the government and other stakeholders. For example, we now have 23 private sector stakeholders, of which 13-14 are financial service providers - which is a huge achievement.”

The benefits of this groundwork were particularly evident when Covid-19 hit. Ali personally sifted through all the medical advice and ongoing updates – where there was no guidance about how to distribute cash – and with the CWG put together detailed guidance on how to best adapt CVA programming during the pandemic.



Photo: CashCap expert Ali Mansoor (furthermost left) with the South Sudan Cash Working Group.

As CashCappers are supported by a full-time global response team, they are able to remain flexible and responsive to needs as they develop and focus on effectiveness and quality during their deployment. These factors are key to their success when shocks, such as Covid-19, hit. Ali was considered the “driving force” behind relevant, timely and effective technical and strategic support that contributed to the expansion and use of multipurpose cash to address the socio-economic impact of Covid-19.

“The humanitarian impact of widening the CWG membership, introducing CashCap expertise and coordination structures ensures that the investments made into this vital sector are effectively deployed and that we are truly a unified community serving the best interests of people across the nation.” Ahmed Takoy, Kush Bank CEO and South Sudan Bankers Association

Being part of a global community

Our CashCap experts belong to a global community of current and former CashCap experts - that play a crucial part of a successful and effective deployment. “It’s not only mine and Rabeea’s work, but it’s a joint effort from all the CashCap experts,” says Ali. “When I have a question I can ask the experts, we have a view on the best cases from around the world.”

Rabeea agrees: “For us it’s like a family – everyone stands up to support. Everyone is there to share your burden and help guide you.”



Making a difference to people affected by crisis

With Ali and Rabeea’s support, the South Sudan CWG is recognised by global and regional actors, as well as with other Cash Working Groups around the world. “We have placed ourselves in a really good position in cash working practice and the humanitarian community,” says Ali.

CashCap’s work in South Sudan is essentially allowing people affected by crises to make their own choices through cash and voucher assistance. With five million people in South Sudan provided with \$52,000,000 in cash and voucher assistance in 2020, the Cash Working Group is making strides towards that goal.

“CashCap has envisioned the use of CVA to ensure the people of concerns are meeting their diverse needs in different forms of humanitarian response by deploying dedicated Cash Coordinator.” Aneel Memon, Danish Refugee Council



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