

THE RECEIPT

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Cash test in the Solomon Islands

Aggy and her son Lonsdale register for an EziPei account to receive support from Save the Children's cash program, which is supported by the Australian Government.

Photo: Collin Leafasia/Save the Children

In November, Save the Children tested Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) in the Solomon Islands – the first pilot of its kind in the country. Our CVA team took part in an earthquake and tsunami simulation, working with other agencies, government, police, and schools to coordinate and test our response mechanisms.

Suliasi Sarosaro, our Pacific Cash & Social Protection Technical Advisor, says “the purpose of the simulation exercise was to validate and enhance our preparedness and response plans, test the CVA operating procedures and to get a feeling of the processes of responding to a shock using cash assistance. It was an opportunity to practice working efficiently and effectively with our partners to provide timely assistance.”

EZIPEI DELIVERS QUICK CASH TRANSFERS

For Save the Children's project in the Solomon Islands, this involved supporting people to register for an 'EziPei' account with the Solomon Islands Postal Corporation. Being registered with an EziPei account means that people like Aggy (pictured here with her son Lonsdale) will be able to receive quick cash transfers from Save the Children when a disaster strikes, so they can choose to buy what they need most.

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Skilling up the sector



Participants celebrate completion of a weeklong CVA training in Fiji.

Photo: Kelly Vacala/Save the Children Fiji

BY KELLY VACALA, FINCAP MEDIA OFFICER

28 humanitarian actors including representatives from UN agencies and Government ministries have successfully completed a week-long Core Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Skills for Programme Staff Training in Nadi, Fiji.

Organised by Save the Children, World Food Programme and the Pacific Regional Cash Working Group, the training further developed the knowledge, skills and confidence of practitioners in high quality design and delivery of cash transfer programs.

Participants were able to learn how CVA is guided by key policies, standards and guidelines, as well as how it needs to be integrated into roles of different teams throughout the project cycle. They also learnt to analyse markets to inform which CVA modalities to employ to respond to disasters.

Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) Fiji Chair Ratu Josefa Lalabalavu said there is a need for humanitarian organisations to be cash prepared now more than ever. “We’re all aware the Pacific region is a disaster-prone area and right now, we are in our tropical cyclone season and therefore we anticipate a couple of cyclones to hit our country... all of this is a culmination of preparedness as humanitarian actors,” said Ratu Lalabalavu. ■



CVA training participants with their certificates of completion.

Photo: Kelly Vacala/Save the Children Fiji

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As a part of the simulation, Save the Children transferred payments of \$500SBD/\$87AUD to 178 people, including 18 people with a disability. John Lilo, Solomon Islands Director of Humanitarian Programs, says, “there is a lot of positive feedback from community recipients. The COVID-19 situation here in the country puts a lot of families into financial trouble and they struggle to meet daily needs and wants.” Reflecting on the benefits of cash over other forms of aid, John says, “The Cash and Voucher Assistance really assists families to build back better by giving choices and dignity to what they really need.”

SHARING THE LESSONS LEARNT

The Solomon Islands initiative is supported by the Australian Humanitarian Partnership. Following the simulation, the CVA team is working to strengthen their response mechanisms and is exploring different ways of delivering CVA assistance to families. The team is also working closely with the national cash working group to build sector knowledge about cash, share lessons learnt from simulations, and agree on a joint, more coordinated approach to supporting people whenever disaster strikes. ■



PNG pilots quick & easy e-vouchers

Elise and her son Herzon purchase books with e-vouchers thanks to Save the Children's cash initiative, which is supported by the Australian Government.

Photo: Rachel Tarsan/Save the Children PNG

Elise, pictured with her son Herzon, was among more than 396 parents in PNG who signed up to buy books for their children using an e-voucher system. The parents were registered for an account as a part of a simulation of our disaster preparedness program in PNG, which is supported by the Australian Humanitarian Partnership.

Save the Children's Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Coordinator in PNG, Kara Jackson, says the e-voucher system is a better way to distribute life-saving support for children. “The system paves the way for information dissemination to the parents on CVA, reduces the risks

in handling cash and – most importantly – at the back of the voucher we have our toll-free number for feedback and complaints to strengthen the program.”

With an e-voucher account and linked debit card, hundreds of people in PNG will now be able to receive support from Save the Children when a disaster strikes, so they can choose to buy what they need most. It's safe, quick, and low cost – and it gets children like Herzon the support they need. “The books help his mind grow, and he has improved a lot,” says Elise. ■



Makereta conducting beneficiary verification in Savusavu, Fiji.
 Photo: Niko Rabuku/Save the Children Fiji

**Meet Ma,
 our Fiji CVA
 MEAL Manager**

Makereta Tawa, or Ma joined the Save the Children cash team in Fiji in December 2020 with a background in development programming. She says, “back then it was just a two-person team... I joined with no experience whatsoever in CVA. Now it’s 13 people in Fiji – that’s the cash team.”

Today, Ma is the linchpin of our cash project in Fiji. She oversees six CVA officers who track our payments and measure their impact on the lives of men, women and children. After each distribution, Ma’s team travels door to door to ask people about their experience receiving a transfer and for their feedback. Commenting on the importance of collecting this kind of data, Ma says, “any evidence gathered by the Post Distribution Monitoring (PDMs) informs the program decision making. It assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of the project and helps us improve.”

CASH IS CRUCIAL IN TIMES OF CRISIS

From our PDMs, we know cash is crucial in times of crisis and that our work has given recipients the opportunity to buy what they need quickly, while also supporting local markets. Ma says, “cash is a modality that allows the

people the choice to choose what they want. Most of the time we do in-kind supplies which sometimes aren’t needed – this is instant relief.” When asked about any recipient feedback that stands out to her, Ma describes the importance of considering the COVID-19 restrictions when planning distributions. A 6pm curfew and the reduced hours of cash transfer points

were some of the obstacles Fijian families faced when accessing payments earlier in the year. The MEAL team has also heard from recipients that increases in food prices have made their lives challenging.

Asked about the future opportunities for CVA, Ma says sector partners are keen to adopt the modality, including in development-based programs. “The interest from the partners has grown over the last months, ever since Save the Children implemented the biggest cash transfer in Fiji. There was a training a few weeks ago for the AHP partners specifically. Listening in what they shared, it’s clear that cash is part of the future for most of these partners,” says Ma.

GROWING FUTURE CASH LEADERS

Trainings like the week-long core CVA skills for Program Staff, organised by Save the Children, World Food Programme and the Pacific Regional Cash Working Group, are critical in getting more cash programs off the ground. Through these workshops we aim to enhance the technical skills of the cash community of practice – and grow future cash leaders, just like Ma. ■

Get in Touch

To find out more about new innovations in cash and voucher assistance, please contact one of our Cash Leads:

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