

Cash and Voucher Assistance, Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence Integration in Humanitarian Response Plans

Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants Case Study

Prepared by: Maja Tønning, [Key Aid Consulting](#), for the [Gender and Cash Sub-Workstream](#), with support from [CARE](#). The case study was created with the inputs of the Regional Cash Working Group, supported by CashCap, and UNWOMEN's regional gender focal point in the Response for Venezuelans.

In October 2020, the Regional Cash Working Group in Response for Venezuelans (CWG-R4V)¹ conducted a regional survey focused on the systematic integration of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) in responding to the needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela. The focus was to increase the uptake of CVA with a strong focus on gender equality, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and protection.² The survey captured the views of 72 CVA focal points from 15 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and fed into the regional strategic planning, more specifically [the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan \(RMRP\) 2021](#).



© Josh Estey/CARE, Venezuelan migrant family in Ecuador

¹ Regional Cash Working Group (RCWG), Frequently Asked Questions ([FAQ](#))

² Technical Consultation for Strategic Planning 2021, Open survey to partners, Regional CWG-R4V, October 2020, [English](#), [Spanish](#).

[The RMRP 2020](#) highlighted the centrality of protection concerns in the Venezuela crisis, which has affected more than 6 million refugees and migrants in the region. The protection concerns are considered to disproportionately affect women and girls who are more at risk of gender-based violence (GBV), trafficking, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Throughout 2020, the Regional Cash Working Group took strategic steps to systematically integrate CVA discussions across the RMRP process including the provision of technical guidance and Technical Advisory support, in addition to the regional survey.

The overarching goal for the Regional Cash Working Group is to support national responses through national / sub-regional platforms with CVA design, implementation, M&E phases and all response processes related to CVA.

The survey intended to make the RMRP CVA planning more inclusive of members and partners. While this made the planning process more time consuming, it resulted in a participatory, consultative process where the regional response CVA plan included the perspectives of the national Cash Working Groups and Platforms across 15 countries. In the regional Cash Working Group, the expectation was that the consultative process for the 2021 RMRP CVA section would translate to increased quality in the implementation of CVA, especially as the ownership of strategic response plans are increasingly transferred to participating partners.

More than 40 organizations responding to the Venezuela crisis in 2020 have reached more than 438 thousand refugees, migrants and host community with multipurpose cash assistance throughout 2020³. According to the [RMRP 2021](#), 47 partners across 17 countries planned to distribute an estimate USD \$183 million⁴ through multipurpose cash transfers, hoping to reach 1.3 million refugees, migrants and host communities. Additionally, the RMRP 2021 highlighted CVA as a strategic part of the GBV response strategy in promoting access to economic support and safety nets for those most vulnerable to GBV. A total of USD \$2.17 million was planned for CVA modalities under the GBV sector in 2021.

Strategic priorities to integrate CVA with gender equality and GBV

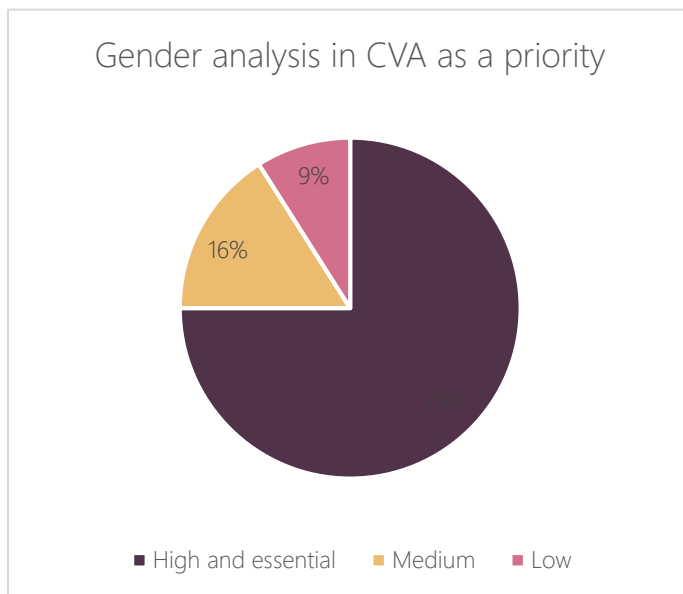
The regional Cash Working Group took initiative at the RMRP 2021 planning stage to introduce gender equality and GBV on the agenda for CVA actors. The process was kickstarted with a [webinar](#) where the GBV sub-cluster presented GBV activities in the response and possible linkages with CVA. This was followed by joint meetings with CVA actors, gender focal points and GBV sub-cluster members, resulting in the inclusion of gender and GBV in the official guidance for partners' strategical planning on CVA.

³ [Situación Respuesta a los venezolanos \(r4v.info\)](#)

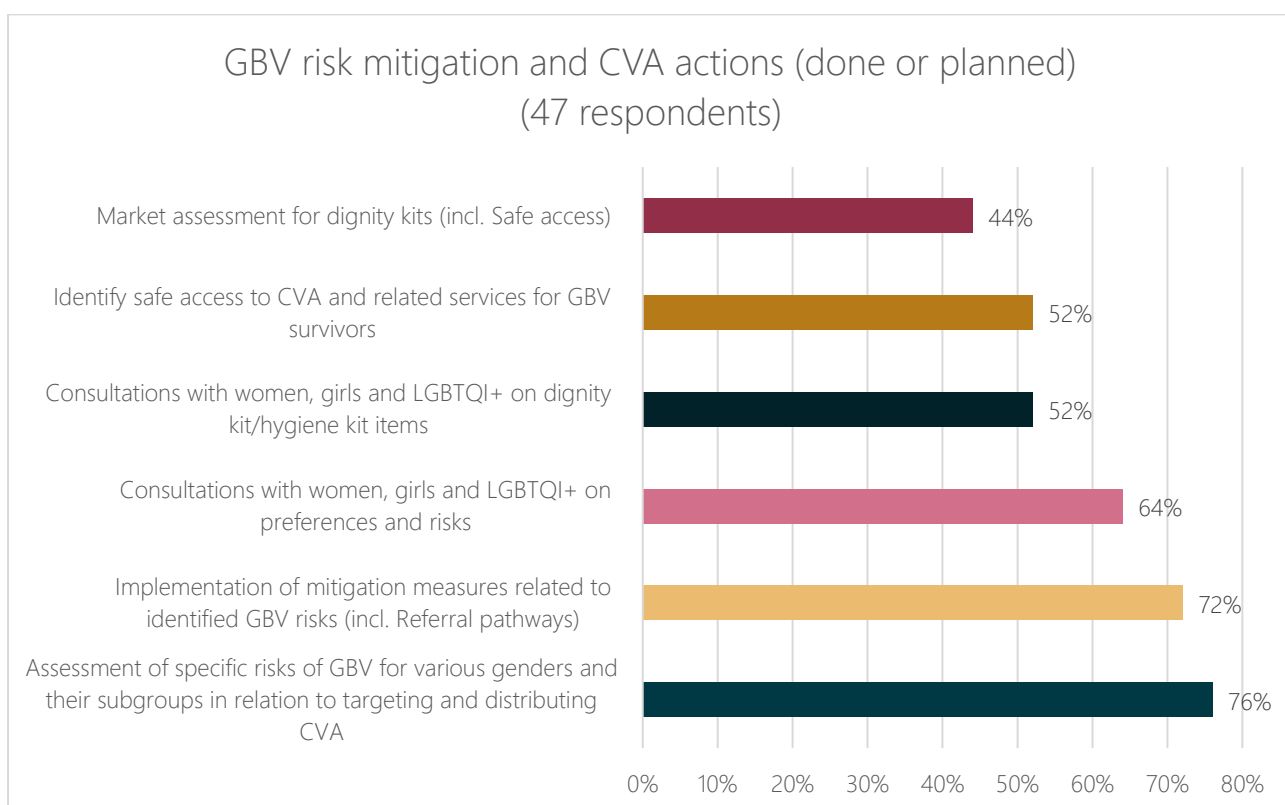
⁴ Out of a total USD \$217 million planned for CVA.

Gender analysis and GBV risk mitigation in CVA:

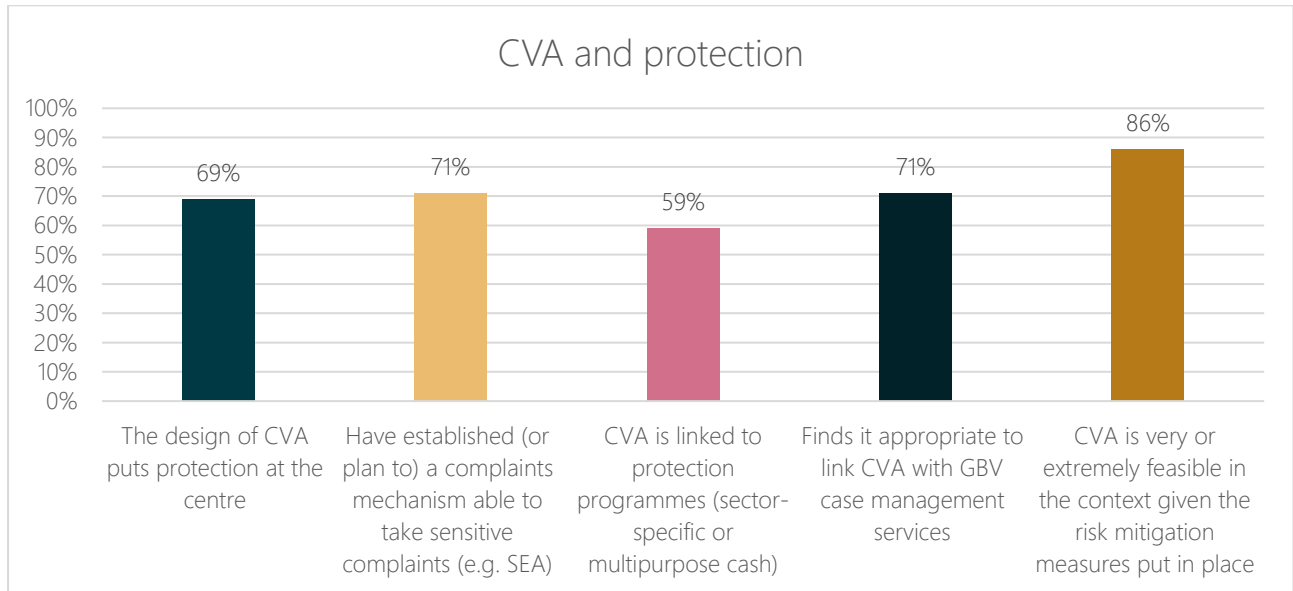
The regional Cash Working Group's online survey was carried out to support the regional analysis on appropriateness and feasibility of CVA for the refugee and migrant population of Venezuela. The survey revealed a high prioritisation on gender and protection issues from respondents. This included 91% of respondents considering identification and analysis of protection risks and benefits as a priority in selecting the response modality and 75% stating that gender analysis should be a priority in designing the CVA response.



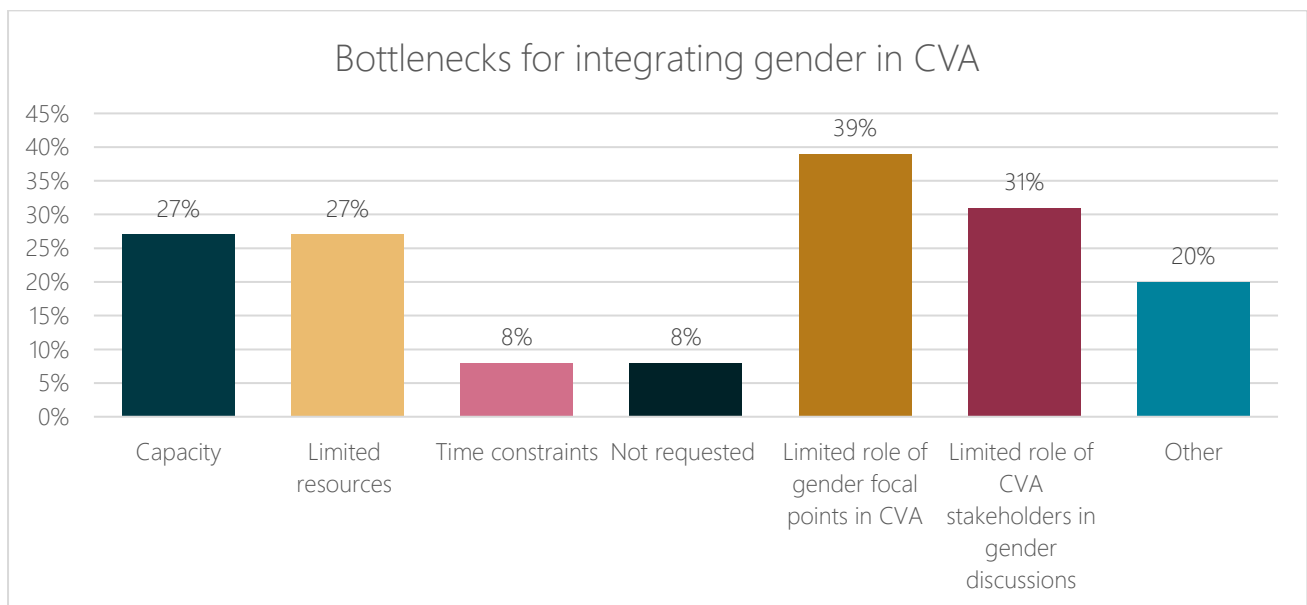
The national Cash Working Group respondents also highly prioritised the integration of CVA and GBV:



GBV case management and referrals: Related to GBV, CVA actors across the region were primarily trained to take in GBV cases as part of their general CVA caseload and to make referrals to GBV case management through existing referral pathways. 71% of survey respondents found the practice of linking CVA with GBV case management appropriate, which was reflected alongside other protection priorities.



Translating strategy into practice: While the regional Cash Working Group reported a high level of both acceptance and ambitions amongst members to integrate CVA with gender equality and GBV, the translation of the agreed strategies into practice may become challenging.



The regional Cash Working Group, gender focal points and the GBV sub-cluster still have a lot of work to do in terms of supporting the operationalisation of the strategic priorities for integrating CVA, gender and GBV in the region.

Key recommendations for other CVA and Gender/GBV coordinators

Several recommendations for key actions emerged from the collaboration between the regional Cash Working Group, UNWOMEN regional gender focal point and the GBV sub-cluster, which can be built on in other contexts:

Gender equality and GBV in humanitarian response planning

- **Mitigating GBV across all sectors:** Bring in gender equality and GBV risk mitigation as core themes in response planning processes across sectors; ideally as early as possible to build the case on existing and emerging evidence. For example, in the RMRP, COVID-19 acted as an enabler where the resulting lockdowns and economic constraints immediately created heightened risks for women (e.g., living with a perpetrator, being pushed towards damaging coping strategies).
- **Engaging GBV experts:** Involve gender and GBV experts in online survey development, promotion and analysis with Cash Working Group members to ensure that the language and terms are sensitively stated and technically correct.

Addressing GBV and gender equality to CVA stakeholders

- **Creating a safe space to discuss GBV:** When discussing topics of gender equality and GBV with CVA stakeholders, ensure that it is done in a safe space where the members are comfortable discussing sensitive and cultural topics.
- **Strengthening capacities:** Develop or adapt training materials and tools related to gender equality, GBV and CVA based on the existing experiences in the region.

Taking GBV and gender equality in CVA a step further

- **Adapting CVA programmes to address GBV risks:** Actors that work with CVA modalities should increasingly be prepared to improve and adapt programming in real-time to address needs, risks and gaps especially for women, girls and other vulnerable groups. This should ideally be done in partnership with GBV actors.
- **Strengthening the evidence base:** Continue to build evidence on CVA, gender equality and GBV linkages. This includes creating a space where women, girls and other vulnerable groups are consulted at the national level by participating organisations and agencies to help shape the strategic priorities included in national and regional humanitarian response plans.