

Regional Cash Working Group Meeting of Western and Central Africa

Minutes

Place : Virtual and face-to face

Date : May 22, 2024 (12-14H GMT)

Participants : 67 including 27 women

Organizations : OCHA, CALP Network, Action against Hunger, IFRC, CRS, DCA, PAM, CARE, UP COOP, NRC, OXFAM, Solidarités International, IOM, Rescue, Mercy Corps, Save the Children, ShelterBox, Caritas, Concern, DG ECHO, UNAIDS, USAID, The Netherlands Red Cross, PUI, WVI, ICRC, GTS.

Context

The third meeting of the year of the regional Cash Working Group (CWG) for Western and Central Africa was held on May 22. The meeting is part of the support provided by the regional CWG to the national CWGs in the region, with financial backing from the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA/USAID). The meeting was co-organized with the OCHA regional office.

The agenda is centered around a “roundtable” on recent activities of the various national CWGs and two presentations, one on group cash transfers (GCT) in complex areas and the other on cash and voucher assistance (CVA) and human mobility, followed by question-and-answer segments, all with simultaneous interpretation in English and French.

1- Roundtable discussions with national CWGs

Available on recording (8mn- 30mn)

- **RDC CWG**
 - Programmatic co-lead coordinator elections to be launched this week.
 - Workshop with sub-national CWGs to improve relevance and cohesion with the National CWG.
 - Programming of the implementation of a survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB) more adapted to field realities, and harmonization of transfer values in collaboration with partners, given that the current MEB is not considered a reference tool.
- **Cameroon CWG**
 - Deployment of **Alexandre Gachoud**, OCHA's new non-programmatic co-lead, for a six-month period in capacity building and training.
 - Update of cash transfer values and adoption of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for joint market monitoring with REACH support for non-food commodity items.
 - Following the inter-cluster meeting held in April, the main recommendation was to support the Protection Cluster in implementing “cash for protection”.
 - CVA training planned for July to update the understanding of CVA by the new local authorities set up in crisis zones, to help them better understand the modality.
- **Mali CWG**
 - CVA advocacy workshops planned with administrative authorities in several regions: Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu.
 - Finalization of the post-distribution monitoring tool for multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA)

- Advocacy note developed to support joint market monitoring initiative - huge gaps in market monitoring in the north - just 145 out of a total of 445 markets in the country are monitored.
- Working with clusters on integrating MPCA indicators into reporting in line with humanitarian planning 2023.
- **Nigeria CWG**
 - Relaunch of the joint market monitoring initiative (JMMI) after a six-month break due to lack of funding - data collection is underway - revision of the MEB is in the planning stage. 03 Training of trainers related to JMMI) are in the agenda: 01 In-person training in Maiduguri and 02 online trainers with partners in Adamawa and Yobe states.
 - The National Counselling Assistance Policy (NCVA) is currently being validated by the Federal Executive Council of Nigeria, and a national action plan is being drafted by the consultants and the NCVA working committee.
The first project is currently under review by CWG's national partners and the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, due to a change in nomenclature and alignment with the mandates of a new agency. A meeting with all counterparts is planned before the launch of the new policy.
 - The first draft of the Financial Services Provider (FSP) mapping tool is available - The tool features an interactive dashboard with a real-time interactive system - Mapping activities in the field are underway.
- **Niger CWG**
 - MEB revision procedure in progress, with particular focus on Health and Food Security clusters following price increases during the last market survey - discussions with the government underway to take into consideration the SMIC (minimum wage).
 - Difficulty of humanitarian access for the implementation of humanitarian activities - humanitarians are required to use escort services, especially partners making cash transfers.
 - The CWG plans to set up a joint mission in the four crisis regions to facilitate coordination at operational level and improve links with the government.
- **Chad CWG**
 - Update about refugees and returnees: Increasing flow of refugees to the eastern part of the country. - At the most recent count in May, 595,346 Sudanese refugees arrived through five entry points - Identification problems - UNHCR pleads with all partners to fill the gaps.
 - MEB update: harmonization of amounts of primary and secondary data collected by CWG in comparison with government, WFP and Taskforce working committee.
 - Finalization of Dashboard with some adjustments: 63 partners - 192,368 beneficiary households in 2023 - Increase in CVA assistance - many difficulties with FSPs, hence 80% of CVAs made by direct payment.

For more information on any of our national CWGs, you can contact the leads and co-leads of the countries concerned directly at the following link:

<https://www.calpnetwork.org/fr/community/cash-working-groups/>

(select the relevant country on the page).

- 2- **Presentation of the latest Cash Barometer report by Ground Truth Solutions
Available on recording (35mn - 39mn)**

Community perceptions of CVA assistance and resilience in northeastern Nigeria:

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/6627e6b66533cd4b7d9441fe/1713891001154/GTS Nigeria CashBarometer April2024 EN.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/6627e6b66533cd4b7d9441fe/1713891001154/GTS+Nigeria+CashBarometer+April2024+EN.pdf)

Some of the points mentioned in this report are:

- Community preference for modalities
- Reasons for modality preferences
- How do beneficiaries spend their assistance during this period of inflation?
- Help in managing assistance to affected people
- Perception of anticipated CVAs for flood victims

**3- Community approaches to emergency response through the Group Cash Transfer (GCTs), the locally led pre-RRM of DanChurchAid (DCA) in Mali/Sahel.
Available on recording (40mn - 1H26mn)**

Within the localization and emergency response framework, DCA presented us with a pilot project located in Mopti and Bankass for a rapid response mechanism called supporting and community-led response (SCLR) implemented with cash transfers to community groups and associations and self-help groups also known as Group Cash Transfers (GCT). This initiative to localize and transfer leadership integrating the SCLR approach to communities is already present in 16 countries, including Mali.

The presentation was accompanied by a video featuring testimonials from GCT-supported groups and beneficiaries assisted under the pre-GCT program. The video sequence also made it possible to capture the impact of this assistance on beneficiaries to be gathered.

- **Approaches:**
 - Unrestricted and unconditional CVA support to representative groups of local community initiatives or established civil society groups.
 - Funding is based on community initiatives to prepare for, prevent or respond to crises.
- **Objectives:** the principle is to put communities at the center of aid by enabling them to design, implement, control and maintain their own resources.
- **Types of assistance: Multipurpose cash assistance; distribution of non-food commodity kits-NFI.** CVAs are generally between \$200 and \$10,000 USD, paid in one or more instalments based on a grant application submitted by the group(s).
- **Coordination:** These applications are evaluated by a validation committee made up of DCA, the regional Directions of Social development and Solidarity Economy (DRDSES) and the commune.
- **Operationalization:** DCA undertakes to provide a response within 7 days of validation of the alert by the regional alert validation committee (Comité régional de validation des alertes - CRVA). [Methodology available on slide 14]. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, following validation, a memorandum of understanding is drawn up between DCA and the beneficiary group, which is responsible for responding within a maximum of seventy-two hours.
- **Good practices:** rapid response; involvement of local players in assessment; registration; information sharing; inclusion of host families and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in cash transfers; feedback on selection processes and post-distribution monitoring (post-distribution perception survey).
- **Added value:** Local leadership, strengthening of local markets by groups, capacity building and consideration of host families and IDPs, harmonization of methodologies and approaches with RRM players.

- **Challenges and limitations:** limited capacity of members to write grant applications, long-term investment in human capital, accessibility difficulties in certain crises, coordination with RRM players, risk of misappropriation of funds or fraud, high number of tools.
 - **Recommendations from beneficiaries (via video):** more than just providing occasional aid, building people's resilience, thinking about harmonized approaches to large-scale assistance.
- 4- Human mobility and CVA; Time to do this better for the people on the move – CALP Network Available on recording (1h26mn – 1H50mn)**

In the same dynamic as the previous presentation, this second one takes a closer look at the theme of humanitarian assistance in contexts of human mobility, exploring the use of CVAs. From the Americas to West and East Africa, and including the Rohingya issue in Asia, human mobility is a global phenomenon. As far as the region is concerned, the main migratory routes are the Western Atlantic route, the Western Mediterranean route and the Central Mediterranean route, with a predominance of men (74%) compared to women (17%) and children (boys-5% and girls-4%). Most of the people on the move come from Niger, Nigeria and the Central African Republic, not to mention the 13.6 million forcibly displaced and stateless people (United Nations Refugee Agency [UNHCR], 2024).

Given that human mobility is a common feature of all crises, as are large-scale CVAs, it is high time to design CVA programs adapted to the contexts of human mobility in terms of the vulnerability factors of people on the move.

Four key concepts relating to the analytical framework are explained in this presentation:

- Considering vulnerability due to the inability to move and other factors to provide humanitarian aid.
- Mobility is seen as a spectrum ranging from motility to immobility, implying the ability to move.
- The term “migrant” is avoided, as it does not consider the needs of “people on the move”, such as demographics, motivations, itineraries, frictions, as well as the infrastructure and legislation of host countries.
- It is important to understand human mobility from the point of view of the person on the move, rather than from the point of view of the agency providing the assistance services.

According to several studies listed, there is no single approach to increasing the use of CVAs among people on the move.

Beneficiaries prefer CVAs, and this calls for a more people-centered approach to CVAs, based on routes rather than country designs, as well as on digital innovations and solutions in the financial sector.

Case studies and evidence-based discussions are available here:

- <https://www.calpnetwork.org/themes/cva-and-human-mobility/>
- <https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/cash-on-the-move-lessons-learnt-from-the-ukraine-regional-response/>
- <https://www.calpnetwork.org/news/episode-8-cva-catching-up-with-people-on-the-move-in-the-americas/>

- 5- Presentation of Granit (Regional Intersectoral Analysis Group)
Available on recording (1H50mn – 1H59)**

In this final presentation of the meeting, the **Regional Intersectoral Analysis Group** (GRANIT) outlined its missions and publications for 2023. Under the leadership and direction of OCHA, IOM and REACH, and in collaboration with other humanitarian actors, this regional group monitors key indicators reflecting the

humanitarian situation in the countries of the region, based on data and analysis from humanitarian and development partners. The analyses produced meet the needs of humanitarian actors in terms of response planning and implementation.

Achievements in 2023 include: 6 updates of the multi-hazard watch tool for coastal countries and an ad hoc product on the Impact of the crisis in Sudan on the border areas of Chad and the Central African Republic.

As part of its **objectives for 2024**, which include strengthening its analyses through thematic meetings, strengthening its relations with key partners/identifying potential partners, continuing to publish bimonthly analyses and carrying out pilot work on the impact of the Malian crisis on the border areas with Guinea Conakry, Mauritania and Senegal, GRANIT is seeking the support of all partners able to contribute to work covering the whole of West and Central Africa in order to produce relevant analyses.

6- AOB

- **A training session on cash and voucher assistance programs and child protection** was organized from May 6 to 10 by Save the Children's regional office. It brought together about 27 participants from the region and Madagascar.
For those interested in the content, the ToR and agenda are available via an email request at C4PTFHelpDesk@gmail.com or Sophie.faye@calpnetwork.org
- **A training course for trainers on Core CVA skills**, attended by 15 participants from the region, took place during the same period as the previous training. This training is a first step towards CALP certification. Participants will obtain their certification after a successful practical co-facilitation exercise.
- **The meeting of CWG Leads and Co-leads** in the region took place from May 13 to 15, in Dakar at CALP regional office, with the participation of several organizations. CALP would like to take this opportunity to thank all the facilitators who contributed to this meeting.