

Investing in Cash and Voucher Coordination in Kenya

Kenya 2019

The **Cash Practitioner Development Programme** (CPDP) is a structured learning and development programme aiming to strengthen the cash and voucher assistance (CVA) expertise of humanitarian professionals in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and expand the ready pool of available cash experts. A distinguishing feature of this programme focuses on **Actionable Learning** from a specific topic related to applying and implementing CVA in real time scenarios giving participants an opportunity to gain experience, insights and technical expertise that is not attainable in a conventional classroom setting and online. This case study is the outcome of an **Accountability and Practice Project** carried out by one of the programme's graduates as part of their course work in the field.

Coordinating Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) is usually weak, done ad hoc, lacks clarity on leadership, purpose, resourcing and linkages with humanitarian responses, including across sectors. This can have a negative impact on efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness due to replication of efforts, double dipping, over assessments, burdens and confusion in beneficiary communities and slowing down critical response time. The case of Kenya highlights the need to invest in the right cash coordination architecture in advance to strengthen the overall impact of CVA.



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Contents

Introduction/.....	3
What happened?.....	4
Results / programme outcome.....	5
What were the main constraints?.....	7
Lessons learned.....	9
Next steps and recommendations.....	10
Conclusion.....	12
Contact information.....	12



Introduction

While the increased adoption of cash and vouchers to provide those most in need with flexible forms of assistance has meant that organizations have had to make investments in changing their operational capacities to deliver CVA, the increased use of this form of assistance has also meant the increased need to coordinate CVA specifically. CVA coordination shares in common with more traditional forms of assistance the need to avoid duplication of efforts, such as with carrying out needs assessments, sharing lessons learned in specific contexts, avoiding the replication of errors, and other issues that concern overlap, such as confusion in beneficiary communities over who is providing what, when, and why, and some households receiving multiple assistance while others, even more in need, receive none. CVA coordination, while sharing the objectives of improved timeliness, efficiency, and effectiveness in common with already existing coordination structures, addresses the disruption with traditional aid delivery, raises some unique issues specific to cash and vouchers, and is typically multi sectoral.

Through the increased use of CVA globally, these specific issues have raised growing awareness and recognition of the need to specifically develop coordination structures that address gaps in the ability to deliver cash-based forms of assistance, especially in emergency response contexts, while also complementing other already existing structures, such as through cross sharing useful information on needs assessments, markets, monitoring and avoiding duplication. However, the CaLP State of the World Cash Report¹ has pointed out that cash coordination has been typically weak, ad hoc, and lacks clarity on leadership, resourcing, linkages with the overall humanitarian response and these have served to reduce overall operational impact. Global Public

Policy² has also reported that there is broad consensus around 5 principles that can guide more effective cash coordination: cash involves technical and strategic functions, requires dedicated, stable and predictable resources, needs to be inter-sectoral, linked to overall humanitarian coordination architecture and host governments should have a strong role.

If there is greater awareness, clarity and guidance over the need to coordinate CVA, integrate it into existing structures, and principles that can be used to guide the way coordination takes place, the question arises as to why this continues to be an issue across countries and contexts where CVA is appropriate and in use across sectors and actors. This case study is not an exhaustive research report that examines the answer to this question. Instead, it focuses on the situation in Kenya to shed some light on challenges that arise in practice when implementing CVA by a range of actors, including the state, NGOs, UN agencies, and members of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (RCRCM). Further, there is no one-size fits all cash coordination architecture that can be simply adopted, replicated and expected to achieve similar results and impact in different contexts. Instead, this Kenya case study suggests the need to address specific country conditions, capacities, the time required to get the combination right, and invest in the CVA coordination architecture in advance. Lessons learned from this case and recommendations are made at the end to help provide practitioners in the field with guidance that may help avoid replicating errors, but also raise awareness of what challenges are likely commonly shared and possible solutions to address specific problems.

¹ www.cashlearning.org/resources/the-state-of-the-worlds-cash-2018

² Global Public Policy Institute Cash Coordination in Humanitarian Contexts
[http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/gppi-\(2017\)-policy-paper-on-cash-coordination.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/gppi-(2017)-policy-paper-on-cash-coordination.pdf)

What Happened?

To respond to a perceived gap in terms of Cash Coordination in Kenya, the Cash Transfer Technical Working Group (CTTWG)³ was set up in 2011 by CaLP. The main stakeholders at that time were international NGOs, UN agencies, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, a representative from the Government of Kenya and independent consultants. The CTTWG was designed to meet monthly to deliberate on various strategic and operational issues specifically related to cash assistance in the country. Despite the establishment of this original framework and coordination body, a study commissioned by CaLP in 2012 that reviewed Emergency Cash Coordination Mechanisms in Kenya and Somalia⁴ indicated weaknesses in terms of cash coordination. This included a lack of participation by other actors, a weak role of the government in Kenya, a lack of integration of cash coordination with other, relevant, sectors, and difficulty in harmonizing the transfer value.

This last issue arose again, for example, in the drought response in Kenya in 2017. Due to a lack of proper coordination, the cash transfer was less effective in some parts of the country due to cases of overlap between organizations that could have otherwise been avoided. As a result, some beneficiaries received more cash transfers while others, potentially more vulnerable and in need, received none or were left out completely. Further, Government supported households received under the social safety net 27 USD, while other organizations provided 30 to 50 USD. This caused considerable confusion among beneficiaries over how the amounts were determined, and for which purposes, in addition to the perception that there was a need to register and apply to those offering the highest amounts of assistance. These issues were temporarily resolved through coordination at the country level through a Country Steering Group (CSG) chaired

by the National Drought Management Authority (a state department). The CSG defined areas for each organization and there was a consensus to expand the social safety net vertically to at least 30 USD in the spirit of aiming for harmonization. Despite this temporary solution, however, the lack of cash coordination persisted.

In 2017, the Kenya Cash Working Group held a reflective meeting that identified cash coordination as an urgent issue that needed to be resolved. While some of the issues above continued, the list expanded beyond double dipping (multiple grants to a single HH at the expense of others receiving none, yet being eligible), overlap and over focus in some areas while ignoring others in need, and varying transfer values. There were also identified issues such as sharing lessons learned to avoid replication of errors, identify and replicate better practices, harmonize approaches, transfer values where possible, and negotiate costs with Financial Service Providers (FSPs). Stakeholders selected the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) as the Chair of the Cash Working Group (CWG) and the Kenya Red Cross as Co-Chair. While this format remained weak in the initial stages, guidance from CaLP in June 2018 helped achieve agreement among members to strengthen the coordination body with a renewed commitment and awareness of the need to address the situation. The CWG also had an agreed upon purpose, terms of reference stipulating leadership approaches, responsibilities of member organizations, and the means of interaction among members and the Government of Kenya. The main objectives were broadly stated to be that the CWG should steer both strategic and technical matters regarding cash-based interventions in the country.

³ www.cashlearning.org/where-we-work/kenya-working-group

⁴ Review of Emergency Cash Coordination Mechanisms in the Horn of Africa: Kenya and Somalia
www.cashlearning.org/downloads/Groupe%20URD_Cash%20coordination_HoA_Final.pdf

Results/programme outcome

Having a coordination body itself, albeit recognized as necessary, was not enough in the Kenya case as outlined above. Instead, it was only after addressing specific problems and greater awareness that the impact of a lack of coordination had on cash-based interventions in actual responses that attempts were made to strengthen the effectiveness of the CWG. According to members of the Kenya Cash Working Group interviewed, there were several core achievements as a result of strengthening cash coordination, all of which would likely have not happened otherwise, namely:

Community of Practice

During monthly meetings, partners shared lessons learnt from their projects in Kenya through presentations, discussions, and publications. This resulted not only in specific ways to improve CVA within this country context, but also included:

- The case study “Cash Transfer Programming in the Asals of Kenya,”⁵ by CaLP
- Kenya Red Cross Society using new technologies to reach communities in hardship locations
- Ongoing further sharing of relevant case studies and lessons learned, including sharing through the CaLP website

The Linking of Humanitarian Cash Transfer with Social Protection

As a result of improved coordination, the CWG supported the Kenya National Social Protection Secretariat⁶ to review and validate the Kenya National Social Protection Policy⁶ in 2019. One of the main achievements was the introduction of pillar number three, which focuses on shock responsive social protection through which all emergency cash transfers plug into the Government National Social Protection. The intention with this is to develop a social registry to enable humanitarian actors to make reference to their emergency cash transfers. Further, this type of system should enable more rapid responses to those most in need while helping to avoid double dipping or excluding those most vulnerable and in need of assistance.

Negotiations with Financial Service Providers (FSPs)

Strengthened coordination and sharing had a direct impact on the use of FSPs. While many humanitarian actors rely heavily on their own delivery systems for in kind assistance, CVA often requires the contracting out of the delivery to beneficiaries through a private provider, such as a bank, financial intermediary, or mobile forms of money, especially for larger scale distributions where risks and security are a concern. As co-chair, the Kenya Red Cross Society had a long-standing relationship with Safaricom (M-Pesa mobile money service provider), and as a result of continued negotiations, cash transfer charges to beneficiaries were removed for Kenya Red Cross Society. Interviews with other organizations confirmed that KRCS is pursuing Safaricom to reduce the transfer charges for other partners in the CWG.

Negotiating with FSPs can often slow down a CVA by months requiring a great deal of an actor’s time and funds to find out which method and provider makes the most sense for the communities they are trying to reach. It was also reported that the mapping of various FSPs was improved and they were able to use the monthly meetings to hear directly from FSPs about the types of services they could offer and potential solutions for meeting specific conditions and challenges. Common meetings not only reduce the burden on the humanitarian community, but also help to ensure that the quality and pricing of services are harmonized in addition to more accurate information about which solutions might make more sense under different conditions; all of which permits more efficient, effective, and timely decision making to reach beneficiaries. This approach has also facilitated collective bargaining for the CWG stakeholders and likely had an impact on the evolution of FSPs to provide services that meet the needs of the humanitarian actors and the communities they serve.

5 www.cashlearning.org/downloads/cash-transfer-programming-in-the-asals-of-kenya.pdf

6 www.socialprotection.or.ke/about-sps/social-protection-secretariat

7 www.socialprotection.or.ke/images/downloads/kenya-national-social-protection-policy.pdf

Closing the Transfer Value Gaps

The CWG developed a workstream to provide Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) guidelines⁸ and in 2019, the workstream further developed a Survival MEB Guidance document to better define the transfer value for the 2019 drought. This was validated across partner agencies with some already implementing cash transfers based on these outcomes. The CWG has also reached out to CashCap to support the further improvement of the detailed guidelines. In many contexts, humanitarian actors need to devote considerable time to collect the information necessary to arrive at a relevant transfer value that is likely to be sound in that the amount will be sufficient for the targeted household to be able to purchase locally what was intended. Calculating this amount also requires, in addition to the correct data, sufficient technical skills, and often across sectors in the case of Multi-Purpose Cash Grants.

Failure to coordinate can result not only in replicating efforts needlessly, but also slow down response times and cause considerable confusion in communities where different actors are offering vulnerable households in need various amounts; households will naturally be tempted to register with those actors offering the most, regardless of the purpose of the grant, or potentially apply multiple times also. Addressing the purpose and the amounts, also with harmonizing approaches, can improve the overall quality of the program and help ensure that the limited humanitarian resources reach as many households as possible through avoiding unnecessary waste.



Volunteers conducting exit interviews during distributions
Photo: © S Hagerich

⁸ www.cashlearning.org/downloads/user-submitted-resources/2019/09/1568028538.MEB%20interim%20guidelines%20document-Kenya%20CWG%20July%202019.pdf

What were the main constraints?

Cash coordination had been in place in Kenya since 2011, but it was not effective or efficient, and many of the weaknesses were likely similar to other contexts, such as CVA being relatively new and not well integrated into the humanitarian response architecture. Further, meetings took place ad hoc. There is also a variety of approaches used across countries for coordination, thus indicating that there is no simple right model that could be expected to fit the conditions of a country or region; there is no one size fits all approach.

However, three issues stand out in this case as having posed constraints on the quality of cash coordination in Kenya. These came out through interviews with stakeholders, namely: leadership, resources and linking this modality to, and complimenting it with, other more traditional sectors in responses.

Leadership in CVA Coordination

One of the five principals under broad consensus as indicated in Cash Coordination in Humanitarian Contexts report by the Global Public Policy institute (GPPi) is the need to have the host governments having a strong role in cash coordination. According to members interviewed, the Kenya government rarely participated in the cash coordination meetings although they were technically the lead. This resulted to slow advocacy of the cash agenda in Kenya.

In Ethiopia, currently the lead agency for the Ethiopia Cash Working Group (ECWG) is UN OCHA which mainly focuses on collecting and sharing monthly agency CVA, coordinating the monthly meeting and sharing information of capacity building opportunities⁹. The government agencies dealing mainly with social protection are very active in the ECWG. In Nepal, the Cash Coordination Group (CCG) was developed after the 2015 earthquake. Cash coordination in Nepal takes the option of an Inter-Cluster coordination architecture. In early 2019, the group was streamlined into the Central Government in the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration and, also sits as the chair to the group with the support of Nepal Red Cross Society (working on 6 months rotational basis with member organisations)¹⁰.

According to the Nepal Red Cross Society, the rotational aspect of the co-lead agency and the active involvement of the government of Nepal has strengthened the cash coordination. This was also defined by the joint efforts of the non-governmental organizations in pushing the government to be engaged in the cash coordination.

A key informant interview with the co-chair of the Kenya CWG indicated other reasons for ad-hoc engagement by the government was due to a lack of internal coordination and bureaucracy among the different state departments dealing with cash for safety net programs. It was proposed that the chair be reassigned to a more superior authority in the Ministry of Interior and Coordination. This will ensure all other government departments using cash transfer are engaged and actively involved in the Kenya CWG forums.

According to the Global Public Policy Institute, the success of any coordination architecture is country and context specific. The stakeholders interviewed affirmed that involvement of the government agencies should be a key pillar to the success and strength of the cash coordination in any country. This lack of clarity over leadership is likely partially responsible for the weakness of Kenya's cash coordination up to the recognition of the need to strengthen the structure.

Resources for CVA Coordination

The Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) paper on Cash Coordination in Humanitarian Contexts¹¹ concluded that there is a strong consensus that cash coordination requires dedicated and predictable resources as one of the five principles. Additionally, the lack of effective resource mobilization strategies leads to ineffective cash coordination. This typically means there are long periods without meetings, high turnover by organizations, lost information, lack of preparation and monitoring prior to disasters, all of which serve to slow down response times in emergency situations since efforts need to be duplicated, restarted, and investments are lost in critical preparations. This results in the struggle to find resources to remain active once donor funds are depleted and interventions completed.

The key informants interviewed indicated that the Kenya CWG lacked dedicated and predictable resources to support the monthly meetings and other initiatives. The meetings were usually done on a rotational voluntary basis where the

⁹ www.humanitarianresponse.info

¹⁰ Asia-Pacific Regional Cash Working Group – Cash Cap 2018-19
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/asia-pacific/document/asia-pacific-regional-cwg-snapshot>

¹¹ www.gppi.net/media/Steets__Ruppert__2017__Cash_Coordination_in_Humanitarian_Contexts.pdf

host supports the expenses incurred during the meeting. The Kenya CWG is in the process of engaging CashCap in the development of MEB guidelines. To support operational costs for the delegate, the CWG had to reach out to ECHO for support.

According to the co-lead for the Nepal cash coordination group, the expenses for the monthly meetings are met by the organization co-leading the CCG supported by UN OCHA to support the coordination resource wise. In Ethiopia, resources are provided by the UN OCHA. According to CaLP discussion notes on cash coordination, there is a need for advocacy with donors and implementing organisations to improve coordination¹². This would entail advocating for resources dedicated for cash coordination and CWG initiatives similar to the situations in both Ethiopia and Nepal.

According to members interviewed, there is a need for the donor community to support cash coordination initiatives in Kenya. This could be provided through on-going cash transfer projects or via the co-chair of the Kenya National CWG. This would ensure all the initiatives, like development of MEB guidelines, joint market assessments and price monitoring, are well executed. According also to CaLP, one of the enabling factors for effective cash coordination should be to ensure that there are adequate resources committed to coordination. This could be through CaLP focal persons since coordination around the appropriate and timely use of CVA in humanitarian response is one of CaLP's mandates.

There is a need for the Kenya CWG to develop resource mobilization strategies needed to support its activities and initiatives. Resource mobilization for cash coordination could be assigned to a partner like CaLP. This activity will also likely play a greater role moving forward as organizations begin to consider forecast-based financing and potentially providing cash to vulnerable at-risk communities before disaster strikes, so that they can take appropriate early actions. This means investments in joint (all CVA implementing organizations) monitoring of risks, vulnerable communities, prices and markets at regular intervals well in advance and having clarity over triggers for mobilizing pre-disaster interventions.

Linkages of CVA coordination and overall Humanitarian response

It is recognized among the cash community of practice that cash coordination should be linked to the overall coordination architecture. This would ensure existing clusters are responsible for coordinating the cash activities of their members. However, multipurpose cash has led to fragmentation in cash coordination. A case study published by ODI in 2017 documents blockers for effective coordination in specific contexts and highlights lack of clear, global guidance on where cash transfer should fit in humanitarian coordination¹³.

In Kenya there is a Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) sub-group focusing on cash-based responses. The CVA sub-committee is co-chaired by the Government of Kenya (both the Ministry of Northern Kenya and other arid lands and the Ministry of Special Programmes as an alternate co-chair). The participation of NGOs in the KFSSG is not as active as their participation in the Kenya National CWG. There are no defined ways of working between the Kenya Cash Working Group (KCWG) and the KFSSG. There have been efforts to bring on-board KFSSG in the KCWG and vice versa, but, without success. This has been linked to a lack of proper coordination among the government departments that is involved in cash transfers. The KCWG has in most cases utilized resources developed by the KFSSG for planning their intervention; for instance, the long and short rain assessments (LRA and SRA) are usually commissioned by the KFSSG cluster. These reports always define how partners in the Kenya CWG plan their response using cash transfers¹⁴. The KFSSG May 2019 long rain assessment report was a guiding document in development of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) for Kenya. According to stakeholders interviewed in Kenya, such an initiative could be coordinated and done jointly to ensure effective and fast response thereby saving lives.

According to the Nepal Red Cross Society, the inter-cluster coordination has been successful since the government of Nepal has played a key role in coordinating all cluster leads. According to the stakeholders interviewed, linking the Kenya CWG with other humanitarian responses could be successful if the government-led KFSSG would extend an invitation to KCWG members to be involved in coordination efforts. The inter-cluster coordination model would be effective as it would reduce the resources gap, reduce duplication of efforts, would be easy to implement as it relies on existing structures and finally it would lead to the effective coordination of multipurpose cash grants.

12 Discussion Note: Improving the Coordination of Cash Transfer Programmes – CaLP <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-discussion-note-on-cash-coordination-may-2017-updated.pdf>

13 <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11283.pdf>

14 KCWG Minutes March 2019 <http://www.cashlearning.org/eastafrica-coordination/kenya-cash-working-group>

Lessons learned

Coordinating efforts and activities across organizations can seem, at first glance, to be a serious burden, especially in the rush to provide assistance to vulnerable households in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. It takes time away from an actor's internal activities, budgets and time, and could actually slow down response time due to scheduling and trying to reach consensus across many diverse groups prior to distributions. On the other hand, a lack of coordination is likely to come with negative outcomes also. There is likely to be overlap across organizations with some areas receiving more attention than others with running the risk that even more vulnerable, harder to reach, households in need are excluded of emergency assistance. Some areas are likely to be over assessed, efforts and mistakes replicated, while better practices are not shared. Similar to in kind assistance, some households are likely in this case to receive multiple assistance while others receive none, and the allocation will not be based on those most in need.

Specific to CVA, transfer amounts are unlikely to be harmonized without coordination, and the cost of setting the amounts tend to be higher due to a lack of sharing of market information, guidance and principles. Multipurpose cash is unlikely to be aligned with the standards of other sectors, such as food, shelter and WASH, without coordination. Organizations are also unlikely to map FSPs rapidly and efficiently without collaboration, nor will FSPs likely evolve their services effectively to meet the needs of the humanitarian community without the lobbying that can come out of coordination.

Further, while there is awareness that coordination is needed to address these issues, and that it is costly, it is also recognized, especially in this case, that the likelihood of achieving an effective cash coordination body ad hoc in response to an emergency is low. Cash coordination takes time, effort, dedication and leadership to establish and maintain, and it needs to evolve to stay relevant within a specific country context.

To summarize, the main lessons learned from Kenya cash coordination are not limited to the following:

- Awareness and a Cash Coordination Body are not enough
- Weak, ad hoc coordination will hinder the efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness of responses
- It takes time and considerable investment, resources, leadership and capacity to develop an effective Cash Coordination Body that is responsive to the specific challenges, conditions and needs in a country context
- Cash is not stand alone, and although there is a case for having a separate Cash Coordination body, it should be linked across sectors to be as effective as possible while providing a platform specific to cash
- Clarity is needed, as well as authority when it comes to state bodies, over roles and responsibilities
- There is no single architecture for a CWG or coordination body. The CWG should have specific purposes, goals, TORs, and buy in from membership
- Weak coordination is likely to result in exclusion of those most in need, replication of errors, lost opportunities in terms of best practices, double dipping, overlap in coverage, over assessment in some areas and underassessment in others; overall wasted scarce humanitarian resources that could have been used to increase the scale of coverage to more people and households in need.

Next steps and recommendations

Although CaLP set up a Kenya Cash Transfer Technical Working Group (CTTWG) in July 2011 to respond to a perceived gap in the cash coordination mechanism in Kenya, there was a renewed sense of urgency in terms of the need to strengthen the coordination architecture after a reflective meeting was held in 2017. The National Cash Working Group (NCWG) was formed to address specific issues, such as harmonization and guidance on transfer values, Minimum Expenditure Basket guidance and tools, feedback mechanisms, among others, in order to resolve specific issues, such as overlap of responses, confusion over cash amounts in communities, double dipping, and sharing of information. Thus, while the need for coordination mechanisms had been recognized for many years, the way coordination took place appeared weak and strengthening was needed.

Thus, there was a need to further strengthen cash coordination in the Kenya context specifically in terms of weakness around a lack of resources to support CWG initiatives, ad-hoc meetings, in-active leadership from the national government, which led to delay in disaster response using cash, delayed cash delivery, replicated efforts and other issues. While improvements have taken place, the following list of recommendations could be useful to help strengthen cash coordination in other similar contexts based on the Kenyan experience, while it is also recognized that there remains a need for further improvements;

Invest in Cash Coordination Architecture in Advance

The Kenya case indicates that even though there was awareness years before of the need to coordinate CVA in Kenya, it took years before a more relevant and stronger working group was in place to coordinate and provide strategic and technical support for CVA in Kenya. Without effective cash coordination (weak, ad hoc, etc.) typical problems such as replication of efforts, double dipping, and lost opportunities from a lack of sharing of lessons learned would continue to reduce the efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness of interventions intending to assist those most in need. It remains unlikely that this type of coordination body could be created quickly from scratch in the event

of an emergency response; instead the coordination body, architecture, has to be invested in and developed in advance, maintained, and play a role of monitoring and preparing, especially in the current context when organizations are developing pre disaster approaches to reduce the impact of disasters on vulnerable communities (ie. Pre-disaster financing and assistance). **Similar to emergency structures being in place, cash coordination structures should be likewise developed and tailored to meet the conditions, capacities, and challenges of the local environment in addition to evolving to respond to, and adapt to, change.**

Aspects of Leadership in Coordination

Replication of efforts by organizations due to lack of single beneficiary database has led to some deserving households being left out of aid. To resolve this, Social Protection policy should be operationalized as it defines the need to foster coordination and coherence among all stakeholders implementing CVA as well as government agencies implementing social safety net programs. The policy provides establishment of a social registry that could be used to deliver cash aid. **This will ensure most vulnerable people are targeted thereby reducing cases of double dipping.**

Leadership of CWG has been assigned to a state department that has no authority over other departments implementing social safety nets. This has led to poor participation of government agencies in the CWG meetings. To resolve this, the leadership of the cash coordination should be assigned to a higher authority in the ministry of interior. This will ensure effective coordination due to authority among all other government departments implementing safety nets through cash transfers in the case of Kenya. **Overall the roles and responsibilities should be clear so that such relevant leadership can be provided for these kinds of issues.**

Further, a lack of defined emergency coordination authority in Kenya has led to lack of a harmonized way of coordinating organizations involved in emergency responses. This could be resolved through the Finalization of the Disaster management bill that will result to development of the disaster management authority. **A relevant authority will ultimately be responsible in coordinating all emergency responses including cash transfer.**

Resourcing CVA Coordination

One of the main obstacles to achieving stable, reliable, cash coordination in Kenya has been a lack of resources allocated for this purpose. This has led to ad-hoc meetings, slow implementation of initiatives like the development of MEB guidelines. There's a need for donor community to support cash coordination initiatives in Kenya and to recognize that despite being associated with some costs, there are tangible benefits in the long run of being better prepared to respond to the most vulnerable in need of assistance. More could be achieved with the same resources more rapidly, if the proper coordination architecture is developed and maintained, even outside of emergency responses, such as monitoring, forecasting, and the maintenance of relevant tools in place. This could be provided through on-going cash transfer projects or via the co-chair of Kenya National CWG. This will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CWG. To address the gaps highlighted above due to a lack of resources, there is a need for the Kenya CWG to develop resource mobilization strategies to support its activities and initiatives. Resource mobilization for cash coordination could be assigned to one partner like CaLP. However, ultimately, there have to be strategies in place to ensure that resources are mobilized for investing and maintaining Cash Coordination.

Linkages of CVA coordination and overall Humanitarian response

While other coordination architecture traditionally exists for humanitarian responses, there are specific issues related to Cash and Voucher assistance that requires a separate, yet linked and complimentary, coordination body to ensure that this modality can be deployed when and where appropriate while scarce humanitarian resources are used efficiently. A lack of coordination of CVA actors and other humanitarian responses has increased has led to duplication of efforts and wastage of resources. To resolve this, the government led KFSSSG should extend an invitation to KCWG members to initiative coordination efforts. This would result in effective coordination across all sectors and effective management of coordination resources. Overall, it would be an error to not have, on the one hand, a CVA Coordination mechanism that is functional in place, but on the other, it should not be separate but rather linked and complimentary to other sectors.



Conclusion

Investing and participating in the right coordination mechanism specifically for CVA can help improve the performance of a humanitarian response in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness. Coordination can help reduce overlap across actors, avoid replication of efforts, gain from shared lessons learned, lobby more effectively FSPs, better utilize their capacities within a specific location, and help avoid double dipping by some households at the expense of others. While these coordination benefits are well established and accepted generally, there is also a case for cash-specific coordination mechanisms since this is a modality that cuts across conventional sectors and there are specific challenges cash and voucher-based interventions need to overcome that would not be addressed in other conventional clusters such as FSP agreements, cash specific risks, or the calculation of multi-purpose transfer amounts. It is also clear that failure to coordinate can have the opposite effect in terms of slowing down response times, overlap, confusion within communities over who is distributing cash, how much and for which purposes, in addition to double dipping. Failure to coordinate ultimately means that the limited humanitarian resources do not go as far as they could to help those who need it most when they need it. Therefore, more people will suffer and resort to negative coping mechanisms than would otherwise have been the case through better coordination efforts, mechanisms and overall architecture.

The case of Kenya demonstrates that it is not enough to recognize the need for CVA coordination. While there are well established guidelines for improving coordination, it takes time, effort, and resources to achieve the right cash coordination mechanism within a specific country context. Further, this needs to be done in advance of an emergency response and this requires effort, resources, buy in and leadership. The case of Kenya also demonstrates what can happen in cash interventions, despite intentions to provide assistance to those most in need, when coordination fails, is not effective, or sufficient investments were not made well enough in advance.

The Kenya case, therefore, demonstrates the need to invest in a well-functioning CVA coordination architecture in advance tailored to the specific conditions within a country. The lessons from this case can be used to provide guidance, evidence, and insights that could be used for strengthening CVA interventions in other emergency contexts: ultimately improving the efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness of a response to ensure that suffering from a disaster is addressed as far as possible in part due to better CVA coordination.

Contact information

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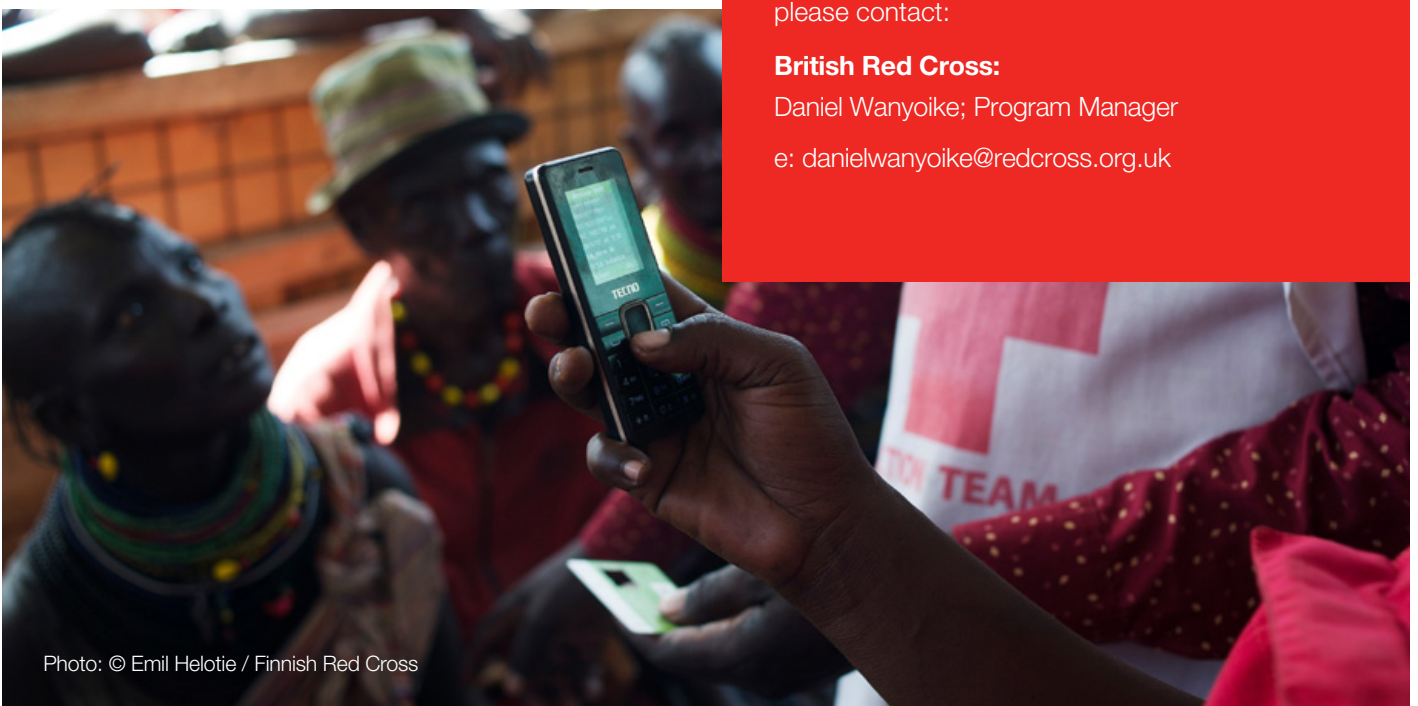


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