

17th November 2021 Cash Hub Webinar Summary Points

Topic: CVA and Digital Tools for Information Management

Speaker	Summary Takeaways
<p>Lars Stevens, Coordinator Cash Information Management, 510 – The Netherlands Red Cross</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The move from paper registration to digital data collection is an important step in strengthening CVA (Cash and Voucher Assistance) and allowing it to be delivered at scale, particularly with the IFRC’s commitment to deliver 50% of humanitarian assistance through the use of cash and vouchers, by 2025. - In the past year 510 have collaborated with 3 IFRC Regional Offices, 4 IFRC CCST and 15 National Societies, aiming to support CVA IM challenges. <p>510 provide support in the following areas:</p> <p><i>Support CVA design with IM</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help increase the understanding around the role IM can play in delivering CVA. - Provide advice on IM strategy in order to easily and effectively run projects. - Provide advice on which IM tools to use, for example how to use RedRose or whether to use KoBotoolbox. <p>These can be done both in preparedness phases as well as in emergency settings.</p> <p><i>Capacity building</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide IM trainings on each part of the programme cycle eg on reporting and visualization. We also have materials developed for Trainers of Trainers. - Support through remote problem solving, providing ‘on the job’ learning. - Share case studies and manuals on the Cash Hub, eg on digitally integrating with financial service providers (FSP’s). <p>Remote technical assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 510 also aim to help reduce NS workload, by building kobo forms, finding duplicates in registrations, visualizing PDMs and securely sharing data with FSPs. - In some cases, the team also develop custom made tools for beneficiary data management or text message communication to beneficiaries. <p>For NS wanting to learn more of the support 510 provide please visit 510.global & contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Email: cash-im@redcross.nl ▪ WhatsApp: +31 6 13 99 92 46
<p>Joseph Onkemetse, Disaster Management Coordinator, Botswana Red Cross</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Botswana Red Cross created a new 5 year road map in 2018, key elements of which were improving efficiency, increasing reach, and broadening the scope of NS’ services in terms of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. Using Cash and Voucher Assistance was part of this.

The Use of Cash & Markets in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2019 the NS used CVA for the first time in a drought response, using commodity vouchers to support 300 households for 6 months to access food (850 Pula = 75 USD approx.), and in-kind distribution to support 130 households to access agriculture inputs. - For the food voucher we had pre-contracted vendors and only food and hygiene items could be procured by recipients with that voucher. - We learned a lot in this programme about vouchers. - Botswana RC was not that familiar with using CVA so sought support from the IFRC Country Cluster office. - Botswana RC is engaged in civil protection systems with the government. - The NS expanded their CVA experience during their COVID-19 response. During the lockdowns the Government was supporting local, vulnerable households with social protection, however there was an unmet need with the number of migrants (especially irregular migrants) requiring support (for many of whom the lockdowns and travel restrictions had made life even harder). The Government therefore asked the Botswana Red Cross to support these migrant populations, which the NS did through commodity vouchers. Under the law the government was not able to support these migrants so they asked Botswana RC to assist. At first the Botswana RC did a value voucher of (550 Pula = 50 USD approx.) to help with their food needs. - The NS then extended their programme, with support from donors particularly ECHO, to deliver multi-purpose cash. This was one of the Botswana Red Cross' first uses of unrestricted cash in a programme and so the NS needed to engage with FSPs and government officials to ensure the right agreements and procedures were in place. In Botswana the government is not so familiar with humanitarian agencies using cash, so some advocacy was needed. - The NS, linking the programme to ECHO funds and support, were able to deliver cash to 1,600 HH for 6 months. <p>Information Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NS had an agreement with 510 to support them in the use of digital information management. - The first step for the NS was to invest in digitalising their tools, moving away from paper-led processes. The NS invested in Kobo, requesting training from 510 in how to use and apply the system. We had used the KoBoToolbox a little before but not a huge amount so 510 held our hand through using it here. We will be more confident in future. - In addition, the NS invested in a paid IM officer role to support the implementation of IM along with new hardware for programmes (tablets for digital data collection). - Previously we used a lot of paper, and there would be times where you were travelling with papers, and there was always a risk of losing that data before digitising it. Now using the new digital processes we can overcome this.
--	---

The Use of Cash & Markets in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From our experience of using CVA in COVID-19 we now have strong ambitions to deliver Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) at scale. - In Botswana we don't currently have a national Cash Working Group, and we believe this would be beneficial and we hope that Botswana RC could play a leading role. <p>Lessons learnt from the 510 partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NS was able to see an increase in the efficiency and security of their data collection. - Botswana Red Cross recognise they still have areas to develop and grow with their data collection and use of IM. Particularly in integrating their data systems and digital programme management; the NS' finance, HR and operations teams all had processes which required further digitalisation and integrating with other systems. The NS is committed to continuing to invest in our IM capacity, believing it is a vital area which can enhance programme delivery (and not just for CVA). - The increase in use of IM for CVA has inspired other departments to digitise their services, for example fleet management now has digital forms and work flows. - Botswana Red Cross' increased capacity in IM has supported their investment in CVA preparedness. The NS has now undertaken their CVA preparedness self-assessment and completed their Plan of Action for CVA, and now looking ahead to their continued journey in the scale up of cash.
<p>Melanie Miltenburg, Coordinator Direct Digital Aid for 510 – Netherlands Red Cross</p>	<p>Experience of Netherlands Red Cross supporting undocumented migrants through direct digital aid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct digital aid is essentially a combination of digital Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and digital CVA. - The term 'undocumented migrants' in the Netherlands represents a broad group of people, including individuals and families who were unable to obtain asylum status and unregistered economic migrants. It is estimated that there are around 40,000 undocumented migrants in the Netherlands. This could be people who don't have formal documents to allow them to be in the Netherlands, or those who have come to the Netherlands and claimed asylum and been unsuccessful for example. - When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020 undocumented migrants were affected by the lockdowns, which prevented them from accessing (informal) jobs, and were unable to receive support from government support schemes. - The Netherlands Red Cross sought to support these individuals, who had not previously been targeted for assistance. - The Netherlands Red Cross began to seek out these individuals and explore how best to support them. Staff tried to visit places that migrant groups frequented such as internet cafes. It was noted that many of these migrants relied heavily upon their mobile phones for day-to-day life. It was because of this observation on the use of mobile phones that the Netherlands Red Cross decided to investigate a digital aid solution.

The Use of Cash & Markets in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

	<p>Design of the direct digital aid programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The programme was designed to be flexible (so it could be adjusted and updated as context and needs might change), safe (particularly that we do no harm to migrants) and scalable (allowing us to scale up for needs). The NS developed a package, using a human centred design approach which focused on what would work best for the NS workers and the undocumented migrants. - The undocumented migrants shared that their main issues were that: they were not aware of their rights as undocumented migrants in the Netherlands (e.g. access to health care which they do have a right to in the Netherlands), they didn't know where to go for support, and they lacked the resources to meet their basic needs. - In response to these needs the three components of direct digital assistance package included a WhatsApp helpdesk, a referral web-app and a digital cash assistance payment (in the form of a digital supermarket voucher). - The programme has now been running for one year and from an operation evaluation the NS learnt that the migrants found the programme supported their dignity, enabled them greater autonomy and reduced their levels of stress over daily survival. <p>Components of the programme:</p> <p><i>Web-application with referral information</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A web-application which provides information on organisations from different sectors which support undocumented migrants, including with health and legal support. This web-app enables migrants to seek out the specific organisations, rather than having to wait to be sought out. - The web-app is easy for the Netherlands Red Cross to maintain, can be scaled up gradually and provides an insight to the needs of migrants through the meta-data from the web-app. <p><i>Whatsapp Helpdesk</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The WhatsApp helpdesk can be accessed anytime, anywhere through messaging. The Helpdesk is staffed 7 days a week and the anonymity helps to reduce the barriers which may prevent migrants from asking for help. - The helpdesk provides the Netherlands Red Cross with valuable insights into the needs and barriers which migrants face, and provides an unsolicited feedback mechanism for the project. <p><i>Digital supermarket voucher</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In order to cover basic daily needs the NS provided digital supermarket vouchers. This was a new approach to providing support for the NS, having only just begun to use paper vouchers at the start of the pandemic. Due to anti-money laundering regulations it was not possible to provide digital cash directly. - This element of the programme was only available to the most vulnerable undocumented migrants. - The programme delivery followed the following steps:
--	---

The Use of Cash & Markets in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A referral was shared with the NS (through a partner organisation referral who have contact with undocumented migrants), the referral included the mobile number of the individual which was obtained with consent from the partner organisation. 2. The referrals were then uploaded into the 121 platform (a digital cash aid platform built by 510/NLRC), which triggered a message being sent to the phone number of the migrant. The message included a link to web registration app (as part of the 121 platform), this allowed reading about the programme and the individual could submit their information through the link. 3. The NS then accessed the information and verified the application, a successful case was confirmed with a SMS message to the individual. The individual then received a weekly supermarket voucher via Whatsapp which could be used at the biggest supermarket chain of the Netherlands. Expansion of the number of retailers that accept the voucher is now being looked into. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The cash transfers have supported migrants by providing means to access basic needs, assistance which is not time or location bound and is provided in a way which promotes dignity. - For the Netherlands Red Cross this form of assistance was quick to deliver and easy to scale up, it also provided the NS with an insight into the behaviour and needs of migrants through meta-data. <p>Figures from the programme to date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25,000 digital vouchers have been distributed to date, in values of EUR15 or EUR35. - A total of EUR440,000 has been distributed to around 1,000 undocumented migrants. - The NS is positive about this use of digital aid in this response and would be interested in sharing their learning in this area, as well as providing technical support to NSs that are interested in setting up similar services.
<p>Jonathan Garro, Data Engineer, American Red Cross</p>	<p>Hot topics in IM for CVA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short term, through the COVID-19 response there is lots of learning around the use of CVA and digital management tools. - There is a focus on the importance of capacity building in preparedness around CVA IM and also being prepared with the relevant IM tools. - Learnings from the IFRC COVID-19 evaluation we have found that people are looking for increased transparency (so that programme staff can better see into and understand their programmes in real time – one solution here is to preconfigure dash boards) and better NS capacity (including the scale up of monitoring mechanisms related to CVA and IM) is needed. - We need to have more people with general IM skills. - In response to these two needs a power BI training was launched for practitioners in the Americas region, focusing on a range of transparency tools and processes. This was about showing for

The Use of Cash & Markets in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

	<p>example how dashboards can be connected to ODK for example so that operational people can see things going on in real time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- In the medium term, looking to improve RC2 in building gaps as a tool. RC2 is an ODK based red cross red crescent operational tool for managing relief operations. It hasn't been hugely adopted currently, and we are brainstorming how to overcome some of the barriers in adoption. There are paid-for proprietary tools like Red Rose for example, but we know that some NS struggle to access these systems due to the cost, so how for instance could RC2 fill this gap.- In terms of new speculative things that people often hear about, we often hear about Blockchain and this can be connected to digital identity. Blockchain can be used to add further transparency into the transaction process whilst still shielding those accessing the assistance. For instance, Oxfam is trialling something in Guatemala where they are distributing vouchers of a Blockchain backbone.- Key messages: Firstly, there is a need to redouble efforts at bringing IM into CVA programmes and processes, looking at how IM can continue to support and strengthen CVA. Secondly the Movement needs to look at how we can use and improve tools which help to enable programme transparency.
--	--

Prepared by Cara Wilson based on what was said in the Webinar and what was shared in supporting documents.