

Q&A from the Mural Board

Webinar on Cash and Voucher Assistance for Migrants: Lessons from National Societies

15 September 2022

People on the move

1. Can you talk about the specific adaptations that were made for people on the move vs. regular programming with CVA? What about migrants who do not have ID documentation, how they can be involve in a CVA programme?

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

In Cox's Bazar camp settlement context, the displaced people from Rakhine who have been there for over 5 years now are restricted to have their own mobile phones and they don't have a recognized national ID (which is a requirement in purchasing mobile sim cards as mobile numbers are being registered in their central ID system) except for the temporary ones that were issued by UNHCR and GOB such as the Family Counting Id Numbers (FCN) and Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) ID. As BDRCS is using Post office (Bangladesh Post Office) as its financial service provider (FSP) where registered mobile numbers are required, BDRCS coordinated closely with the government and with BPO. As a result, BDRCS was allowed to open mobile sim numbers registered under BDRCS solely for cash disbursements while each mobile number had been assigned to cluster of beneficiary households in order to receive verification codes during the day of cash payout. Additionally, BPO has considered the beneficiaries' temporary IDs (MOHA and FCN) to be used as references.

Chilean Red Cross

The CVA programs have several modalities and mechanisms of implementation. These can be adapted to different contexts, in cases of people on the move, it's important to change the "country" focus toward the "route" focus. We have been working with this approach lot of time, based on the country or place where migrants and refugees are, but currently, there is a need of focusing on the route that these persons through.

A coordinated answer, based on humanitarian points on the route, could have an impact on people on the move. If there is a predicable point where they could find the humanitarian aid, maybe they would choose a different route with that knowledge. This option of course would find a political resistance in some cases, or sounds quite difficult right now, but as humanitarian agents we need to encourage a proper humanitarian action to solve people suffering, always improving the protocols and programs.

In relation to the use of cash, and its impact, maybe we need to design "movement" indicators, which allow us to measure the specific impact that CVA programs might have during the migratory route, thinking in the persons and their different profiles (and needs), rather than the country they will arrive. Also, having a specific channel of communication to CVA beneficiaries would help with the track of these aids. For example, a simple contact number, easily to remember from any place they will be (as 911), would be a good resource to keep in contact with them, so they will change their initial cellphone without risks of lost the contact with the organization.

About ID documentation, in our case, there is a process for migrants and refugees to get the migratory regular status. If they crossed by an irregular way, they have the "self-denunciation procedure" option. It's an ID provided by police, so they can use it as an ID document too until the procedure ended. As well as, refugees can use the asylum form request as an ID document, so, in both cases, the migratory papers for the regulatory process work as an option when they lost their documents or passports.

2. Can you talk about any political obstacles that you overcame to provide CVA to people on the move?

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

In connection to the above-mentioned context in Cox's Bazar camps whose answers can also be addressing this question, they have been limited to move only within the camp settlement boundaries and even outside the camp areas where they are located unless permitted or approved by government. As there are very strict regulations also in place to enter the camps (especially in the early periods of the operation), part of the overall strategy was for BDRCS to choose Bangladesh Post Office (BPO) as their financial Service Provider in providing cash assistance and as BPO is generally considered under one of government's departments (Ministry of Post and Telecommunications), requesting access to enter the camp for them during the cash distribution was a bit easier.

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

3. How do you ensure acceptance of host community?

4. How much of CEA tools and approaches did you include in your program to ensure your target population is engaged, participated and felt listened to?

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

Generally for BDRCS in Cox's Bazar regardless if the CVA activity is for camp or for host communities, the following are set of mechanisms that have been included in the process:

- a. Community consultations through conduct of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) where 3 sets of groups (male, female, and adolescents) are formed in each target community in the initial phase of the implementation in order to sensitize the community about the project and to also determine their overall perspective of a most vulnerable household that will serve as guide in developing inclusion and exclusion criteria in selecting beneficiaries.
- b. Establishment of Community Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms through setup of feedback boxes and help desks with volunteers in strategic locations (in camps, BDRCS has Information hub centers) and hotlines (applicable for host communities only) during the implementation period to ensure that communities' concerns and feedbacks both those that were selected and especially those that were not, on each of the CVA process especially in the beneficiary selection phase, are documented and addressed before the list is finalized and before the cash assistance is distributed.
- c. Exit Surveys and Post Distribution Monitoring (PDMs) serve as tools in capturing beneficiaries' level of satisfaction on the overall process including the effectiveness of the cash and voucher assistance provided that will help in improving the CVA implementation in the future.

Chilean Red Cross

Awareness campaigns are a very useful and comprehensive resource that can be applied, using testimonials from refugees or migrants can allow the host community to see their situation from empathy, or from a more human approach. We work with different CEA methodologies to bring the migrant population closer and the host community: maps of the migratory route, infographics, forums, multicultural meetings, among others. Always toward an emphatic environment, where host community could understand that migration is a right, a natural human process, and anyone could be one some day, so, it would be wonderful if all of us will have a supportive host community waiting in any country.

We have a specific contact number in our CVA programs, so the beneficiaries can write and solve all their doubts by WhatsApp. We share with them tutorials, instructions and audios of how to use the Visa debit card that we give it in the programs. Likewise, we encourage them to manage their money, deciding which items they need in specific, all decided by them. By the end of the CVA period, we select a number of beneficiaries with the donor, to apply the PDM instrument, receiving feedbacks and how useful the CVA was to support their needs.

Practical aspects

5. What are the amounts you distribute?

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

For the Provision of Essential Household items using E-vouchers activity, on the value of the voucher which we used for the beneficiaries especially in Cox's Bazar camp settlements, we referred to the government approved guidelines on the provision of NFI through restricted vouchers in camps recommended by the Shelter/NFI sector under the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) where BDRCS/IFRC have also made significant contribution during its development and approval as we were the first to pilot it back in 2019.

Meanwhile on the Multipurpose Cash Assistance, we have always referred to the value of the Multi-Purpose Cash Grants (MPCG) recommended by the Cash Working Group in Cox's Bazar.

Chilean Red Cross

About CVA, we have different amounts for each program, but always within the ranges according to the needs of the people we attend. Of course, we are careful that our aid doesn't create a problem in relation to government aids. We are constantly working with the donor, negotiating the aid that is most accurate to solve the needs of the people.

6. How do we ensure that the cash transfers do not become a pull factor to migration?

Chilean Red Cross

In our programs we have some indications to make sure that people know that our CVAs are a specific aid for the short and medium term, always urging them to empower their situation and get out of the state of vulnerability they find themselves in, since we try to deliver the aid by only once per family group, at least during the application period of the programs. If they need specific aid, and for

example, we already gave them CVA of basic needs, we work with partners to offer them alternative solutions in a comprehensive way.

If we need to demonstrate that the humanitarian aid isn't a "pro-migration" factor, it's essential to strengthen the principles of the movement, emphasizing before local governments that our actions are always in pursuit of alleviating human suffering, without promoting or discouraging any process.

7. It would be great to know how we assess the Minimum Expenditure Basket. Do we have Pre and Post Distribution CVA? It would be good to know the experience.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

In the case of Cox's Bazar, the cash working group that is currently functioning as a coordination mechanism among all agencies implementing CVA related activities is attached under the umbrella of the Food Security Sector (FSS) under the ISCG that is leading the periodic conduct of different types of assessment that would lead in the determining Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) which will also be the reference in determining and/or updating the MPCG transfer value.

On the aspects of Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM), for BDRCS in Cox's Bazar, what is normally used are Exit Surveys which is conducted during the distribution whose main aim is to determine the beneficiaries' understanding on why they are selected, satisfaction on the overall process, and to initial plans on how the cash they received will be utilized. While the PDM is done usually 2-3 weeks after the cash assistance is received to determine how the cash was actually used and their views whether the value of cash assistance is sufficient or not.

Chilean Red Cross

About the MEB, it should be seen as a quantification of needs, rather than a calculation of money. There are multiple basic sectoral needs to consider (health, nutrition, education, livelihoods, housing, among others), so working side by side with agents from these sectors can generate a good MEB analysis. The best source of information for the MEB data will always be the target population, especially if it's going to be applied in contexts of humanitarian crisis. Within this, the gaps between people's capacities to support their basic needs and total household expenses are analyzed. Everything depends on the objective that the CVA will have, of course. Finally, the participation of the government in the process can be very relevant, its social protection systems can function as a reference base. Still, humanitarian actors can remain the leaders of the clusters.