

**MENA CVA COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
MEETING #35**

Minutes of Meeting



5th Nov 2024

The meeting #35 did take place in 5/11/2024 in person in Dubai within COP series meeting.

Meeting Attendees

IFRC CVA thematic lead : Nabeh Allaham,
Cash Center of Excellence: Reem Jawhari , Nagham Sayegh
Lebanese Red Cross: Nour Hamadeh , Elias Hazoury ,Elisia Abdo
Egyptian Red Crescent: Jihad Mohamed
Iraqi Red Crescent Society : Racha Younes .
Iranian RCS : Abbas Mohammadi
Libya RCS : Mohamed Sahli
Jordan RCS : Atallah Al-Hwayan
Syrian ARC: Mazan Shikim

joining online :

IFRC global cash team : Joseph Oliveros

Cash Hub : Azim Norani

Meeting Details & agenda

Time	Session	Facilitator
8:30 - 8:45	Opening	Nabeh Allaham
8:45 - 9:00	Welcome & opening	Nabeh Allaham
9:00 - 9:15	Introduction	COP members
9:15 -10:15	CVA in MENA region.	Nabeh Allaham
10:15 – 10:45	CCOE <u>presentation</u> Provide what have been achievements, updates, and challenges of CCOE during last year.	CCOE
10:45 -11:00	Coffee break	
11:00-12:30	NSs presentation	NS CVA focal presentation
12:30-1:30	Lunch	
1:30 – 1:50	IFRC_CVA global	Josheph Oliveros online
1:50-2:55	NSs presentation	NS CVA focal presentation
2:55-3:15	Cash Hub	Azim Noorani online
3:15-3:30	Coffee break	
3:30-4:30	Priorities and coordination and collaboration approach	Group work:
4:30-5:00	Finalize and combine the priorities of the NSs CVA FP.	Nabeh Allaham
5:00 – 5:15	Closing the COP meeting	Nabeh Allaham

Meeting minutes:

This COP meeting is considered the Nineth meeting in the series of COP monthly meetings in 2024. It was a good opportunity to bring all the CVA focal point together before ending the 2024 to cover the challenges and achievements in 2024 , in addition to different points and focus on ongoing activities nationally, regionally, and globally with MENA NSs focal points, and provide an update from the facilitator , where the CVA FP manage to present their CVA achievements , challenges and recommendation , and highlighted the key activities to 2025.

1. Opening the meeting:

Nabeh Allaham the regional thematic lead opened the meeting with welcoming the COP members, and covering the main purpose of this meeting, and explaining the COP agenda , then open the floor to the members to introduce themselves

2. CVA in MENA region:

In this session the CVA thematic lead take the participants through the CVA component in the MENA region, provide a debrief on the MENA CVA Community of practice, with how many members, the NSs who are participating the CVA COP, the PNSS in addition to CashHub and ICRC, while the COP is facilitated by the IFRC .

Elaborate on the NSs CVA readiness level (organizational and operational) , with how many national society conduct the CVA self-assessment exercise , and what are the key component that we should focus on to build the CVA system in the NS and be prepared to use CVA in emergency and long- term programme .

Then move to indicate when CVA has considered as a response option in both DREF and Emergency appeal.

In the other side, it was important to mention where cash has been integrated in different sector like (livelihoods , health, food, basic needs, etc.) , and present the results of cash counting exercise for 2023.

One more slid about the movement cash community and their roles, and how coordinate together (regional COP, CPWG, AWG, and TWG) , then open the floor for any questions on what had been presented .

Then move to the milestones for the last two years, on what has been achieved, and how we did manage to reach out to this strong COP , while the main achievements were as following:

2023	2024
CVAP tools to Arabic	Mena CVA preparedness overview dashboard
MENA CVA risk register _Task force	Mapping the contracted FSP with MENA NSs.
<u>CVA recommended trainings list</u>	<u>Protracted crisis webinar _CCOE_YRCS ,IRCS</u>
Peer to peer 2023 _5 Ns - CCOE	Co-chairing of the COP by LRC 4 months
Set up the regional technical <u>team</u> .	Cash counting exercise 2023
End up the MENA COP page on cash hub	<u>Syria earthquake response 2023 _SARC,CCOE</u>
MENA CVA regional roadmap 2024-2025	Peer to peer 2024 _Tehran _4NS -CCOE
MENA CVA newsletter	
Cash counting exercise 2022	

While the challenges haven't been shared, in purpose to do a group work at the end of the day to identify the main challenges and focus together on proper solution and put their recommendations.

3.Cash center of excellence CCOE:

The CCOE present a glance on the CCOE establish and what is the CCOE TOR , and how they complement the IFRC role in the following functional areas like (Knowledge and Learning Management , Technical content contextualization , Support in CVA Technical strengthening , and Advocacy and Networking) ,In addition to the coordination mechanism with IFRC regional thematic lead to strength the capacity of the NSs and enhance the lessons learned in CVA in MENA Region .

The presentation focused on the key achievements of the CCOE in the last two years 2023/2024 , on the level of the Knowledge and Learning Management :

- Capturing and disseminating key MENA National Society CVA learning and best practices.
- Key CVA news and developments in the region Summarized in a biannual 'Echoes in MENA CVA newsletter – first edition published in February 2024.
- National Society CVA case studies collaboratively developed and/or proofread and contextualized to MENA context.
- Case Study with Yemen Red Crescent on communicating around CVA which is currently being finalized.
- Issuing of a call for learning materials (November 2023) to all MENA National Societies.
- Supporting the compilation of CVA related documents and resources hosted on the Cash Hub platform

In addition to Organizing, facilitating and hosting webinars with a focus on CVA in the MENA region as following:

- CVA in Protracted Crisis in the MENA region' , February 2024: provided insights from Yemen Red Crescent, Iraqi Red Crescent and IFRC on the importance, challenges, and best practices surrounding CVA in prolonged humanitarian emergencies and protracted crisis.
- CVA in Earthquake Response | From Destruction to Reconstruction – SARC response' , July 2024 – focused on the Syrian Arab Red Crescent's CVA response to the 2023 earthquake providing insights into the process, challenges, and best practices.
- CVA internal and external coordination (forthcoming in October 2024).

Related to the amazing CVA peer to peer exchange programme , in order to provide a dynamic space enabling in-person sharing of experiences, best practices, challenges and lessons learned from CVA programming CCOE conduct three events :

- A first peer-to-peer exchange was hosted by Lebanese Red Cross in Beirut in December 2021 with representatives of the Iraqi and Algerian Red Crescent Societies.
- In January 2023, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent hosted an exchange with representatives from the Egyptian Red Crescent, Lebanese Red Cross, Palestine Red Crescent and Yemen Red Crescent .
- A third peer-to-peer exchange was hosted by the Iranian Red Crescent in March 2024, with visiting participants from Iraqi Red Crescent, Lebanese Red Cross and Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

In addition to the CVA mentoring programme in collaboration with the Cash Hub's Cash School, aims to strengthen Movement regional CVA capacity and offer targeted learning and development opportunities for practitioners, where the closing the programme event took place in the next day 6th of NOV in the same place with inviting the cashHub , and the mentees and mentors.

4.National societies presentation :

During this face to face meeting , the agenda allocate 20 mins for each NS to present on its CVA activities where the structure has been shared by email with the FP who will attend the meeting as following :

Presentation structure :

- Summary on the National society cash journey (milestones) till 2023 .
- Key achievements of 2024 (till Nov)
 - Please make the NS CVA achievements on specific technical area :
 - Operational: project sector % MPCA, modality, delivery mechanism, Nu of HH geographical coverage ,CVA tools , capacity building .
 - Institutional: management buy in, cash system, internal coordination, FSP agreement , CVA SOP .
- Key challenges: on (operation , technical , or institutional) level with KEY ECOMMODATION .
- Plan of 2025: what is the action plan on all relevant level if applicable (some ideas to consider):
 - Mainstreaming cash with another sector
 - Advocacy to management or authorities
 - Internal and external coordination
 - New modality, delivery mechanism.
 - Sharing experience.
 - Knowledge management.
 - Capacity building plan.

Iranian Red crescent society:

Abbas mohamadi the CVA FP in the Iranian RCS present on the national society experience in using CVA as a response option in various disaster like (Bam Earthquake 2004 , Kermanshah Earthquake in 2017 , Sistan Baluchistan floods 2019 , kohkiloye earthquake 2021, Harmozgan earthquake 2022 ,and Azerbaijan Khoy earthquake 2023), where cash assistance distributed to the affected people with mentioning to the selection criteria , delivery mechanism and the transfer value.

Achievements:

- Established the internal CVA committee for improve the coordination between the departments to ensure smooth operation.
- National society consider CVA as one of the response option when is feasible .
- Internal negotiation on establishing a CVA SOP .

Syrian Arab Red crescent :

Mazan Shikim the CVA manger present on CVA milestones from 2018 to recent time by developing and extending the CVA team, under specific structure and NS experience in using CVA under different sectors , and services like (Disaster management , livelihoods , community services& protection , Health ,risk education) , then explaining in the importance of the CVA capacity building training and what are the key trainings has been conducted in the last three years .

In terms of achievements, SARC management advocating to use CVA and include it in their strategy 2023-2027 , create a online interactive dashboard for CVA interventions , standardize the CVA tools in different sectors .

SARC plan for 2025 is to establish two new teams in two new branches, mainstreaming CVA in a new sector (Wash) , using a new delivery mechanism (Mobile money) , strengthening the knowledge management documentations and share with movements partners , enhancing the CEA component in CVA interventions , positioning SARCin coordination initiatives (national CWG , and Movement Cash working group).



Iraqi Red Crescent:

Rasha Younis from Iraqi RCS present in the national society experience in using CVA and the milestones,



In relation to the key achievements, IRCS managed to finalized the CVA SOP and endorsed by the managements , established the CVA preparedness plan for 2025 , conduct a CVA lessons learned workshop and tackle the best practices .

The POA of the Iraqi RCS for 2025 will focus on the capacity building for staff on HQ and branches level , mid-review of the cash self-assessment workshop.

Lebanese Red Cross:

Elisia Abod the ECOSEC coordinator present on LRC structure and division , and where CVA is located with the capacity of the LRC in cash and voucher assistance , as the LRC using cash in different sectors like (MPCA , livelihood , Food , wash , in addition to anticipatory actions (cold wave interventions) , with various partners (German RC , Danish RC , ICRC , British RC, Netherland RC , etc.

With highlighting the ongoing simplified early action protocol for winter storm by targeting 1600 HH , with 70\$ one time to cover 7 days.

The presentation included the CVA response phases and steps in emergency , particularly during the ongoing emergency in the south , with focusing on the rapid assessment and planning to response within 6 weeks , where LRC is planning to target 20,000 IDPs household, with 150 USD for one time , with two topped up additional assistance according to the fund availability .

In terms of the capacity building, LRC intending to analysis their capacity by the following chart :



LRC plan for 2025 focusing on conducting the CVA self-assessment exercise , and develop the training path for staff and volunteers ,ensuring the CVA intervention quality , strengthen their internal and external collaboration and coordination , in addition to continuing their commitment to centralize the targeted people in their response , CEA, PGI , and green response



Egyptian Red crescent:

Jihad Muhamad the ERC head of social development departments presents on ERC CVA milestones till 2024 , where CVA SOP is designed and approved by the different ERC apartments , to be aligned with the ERC new strategy , ERC managed to made an agreements with tow FSP , the Fawry company , and the post office for 2023/2024.

As ERC managed to formalization the cash in hand response to Gaza crisis in 2024 , in addition to co- lead the Egypt cash working group to the end of 2024 beside the WFP and UNHCR , at the end ERC participated in writing the CWG strategy 2024.

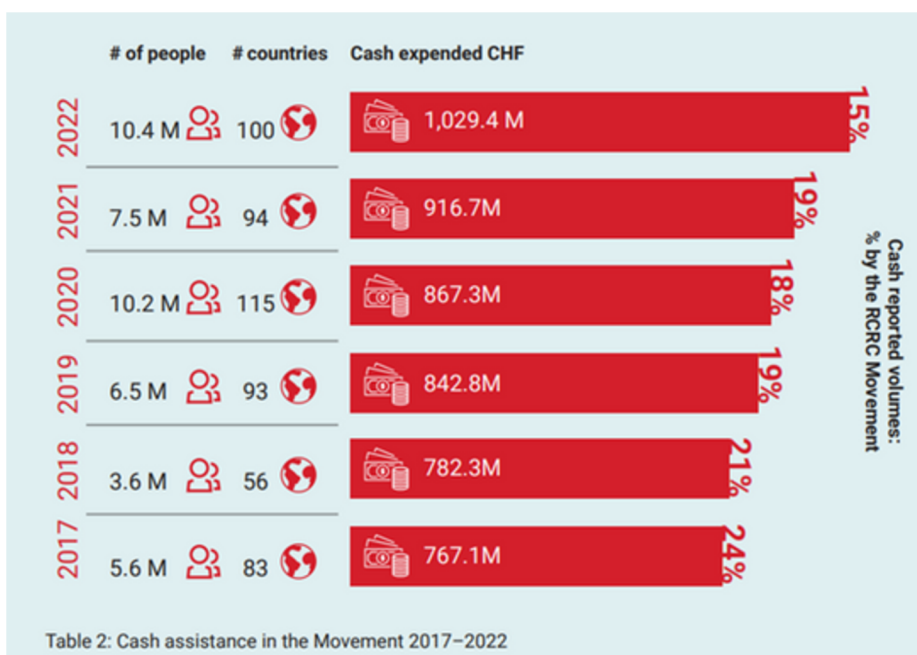
In addition, the ERC achievements in 2023 represented by delivering the Cash assistance to suddanness (460 capita , and 4030 HHs) in three governorates though the FSP , while the cash has been distributed to (112 capita , 623 HHs) through cash in hand to Palestinian people IN 2023/24, in collaboration with the ICRC ,HUNGAY HELPS and UNHCR .

Referring to the CVA capacity building, ERC still focusing on building the staff and volunteer capacity in CVA programme in emergency and long term intervention .

Global cash team.

Joseph Oliveros the cash global lead joined the meeting online from Geneva ,presented on the global CVA intervention and preparedness on the movement level , with mentioning to the key information on the number of targeted people who received cash in 2021 vs 2022 , The number of National Societies investing in their institutional capacity to deliver timely, effective and accountable cash assistance where needed , while 73 National Societies were actively engaged at the end of 2023, compared to 53 in 2020 and four in 2012.

In the other hand, provided a brief on the Scoring of CVA in the movement from 2017 to 2022 by the chart below :



Joseph explain on the importance of the CVA preparedness for NSs, and what are the key areas to focus on to deliver CVA in a proper way , in addition to the new CVA application that has been developed by IFRC , Access RC .

Cash hub :

Azim Norani from the cash hub joined the meeting online from UK to present on Cash hub activity and services , and focused on the dignity in action 2023 reports , by highlighting the ten key messages of the report ,and how National Societies are strengthening their preparedness and capacities to provide cash assistance, and engaging in and leading coordination efforts with other humanitarian and social protection actors , and the important of the lessons learned and best practices from the other NS CVA interventions .

[1] Dignity in action 2024 : [Dignity in action RCRC report](#)

Group work exercise

During the full-day meeting, the CVA Focal Points (FPs) were divided into two groups, each consisting of six participants. These groups worked collaboratively to identify common challenges in implementing CVA and propose key recommendations to address them. Each group documented their challenges on a flipchart and discussed them openly with all participants. Through this collaborative process, they reached a consensus on the best solutions and outlined their priorities for Community of practice to enhance and strengthen the coordination and collaboration between each other .

Key challenges :

- This part has been separated to list all the challenges that the NS facing toward implementing cash and voucher assistance:
- Sanctions on the NS
- Inflation.
- Gaps in policy.
- Bureaucracy system on both level donor, and National society.
- Decreasing the CVA funding from RC/RC partners.
- Volatility of exchange rate.
- Liquidity.
- Lack of capacity of the Financial service providers, geographical area.
- Government legislation and instruction.
- Turn over CVA staff and volunteers.
- Political & Security Instability.
- NSs CVA focal point are overwhelmingly with various tasks.

Recommendations :

- Strengthening NS policies in implementing CVA programme, by providing and sharing divers learning opportunities .
- Utilizing the best practices and COP and the other colleagues in NSs.
- Conduct a CVA training, awareness session on the regional and county level.
- Extend partnership with a new partner beyond the movement partners.
- Establish a framework agreement with the potential FSPs.
- Flexibility in modality determination in accordance with the context

Key priorities:

- Keep on the Community of practice monthly meeting ,Increase participation in meetings and encourage members to be more actively involved.
- Organize face-to-face meetings twice a year to strengthen collaboration.
- Ensure all CoP members take responsibility for sharing available resources, research, and studies from their respective countries with the MENA CoP.
- Focus on documenting lessons learned and best practices, ensuring they are shared with CoP members.
- Form a technical task force to address specific CVA areas or provide support to National Societies (NSs).
- Develop a shared repository of tools and materials, including sector-specific adapted tools, for use by CoP members.
- Contribute to the creation of a MENA CVA newsletter to enhance knowledge sharing.
- Collaborate with the regional CVA thematic lead to facilitate shadowing opportunities among MENA CVA Focal Points.

all the points that raised up by the COP member will be involved in the MENA CVA Plan of action and follow up on the progress regularly .