

- Each ACTION LEARNING report is authored by a CPDP practitioner and reflects their unique perspective, grounded in direct engagement with CVA activities.
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Cash Practitioner Development Programme (CPDP) participants share key insights and lessons learned from the implementation of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), both within their own National Societies and through experiences gained during learning deployments.

These **Action Learning** projects capture operational and strategic reflections, linking technical, professional, and organisational learning to real-world CVA practice. The insights generated are valuable for others working in similar humanitarian contexts

“CVA Program Delivery: Factors affecting Program Delivery to scale up CVA within South Sudan Red Cross”

Kiden Doris Victor - South Sudan Red Cross

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Introduction

Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) has become an increasingly prominent modality in the humanitarian sector, representing a direct transfer of cash or vouchers to individuals, households, or communities affected by crises. This approach empowers recipients by providing them with autonomy to address their most pressing needs and prioritize expenditures according to their unique circumstances. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recognizes the value of CVA in delivering protection, assistance, and essential services to forcibly displaced populations, noting its ability to foster dignity and contribute to local economies. Similarly, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) views CVA as a rapid, adaptable, and secure method for delivering emergency relief and supporting the long-term recovery of individuals and communities affected by conflict and violence.

The evolution of humanitarian aid has witnessed a significant shift towards CVA as evidence mounts regarding its advantages over traditional in-kind assistance. Unlike the provision of specific goods or services, CVA offers greater flexibility, enabling recipients to make informed choices and prioritize their needs, whether it be food, shelter, healthcare, or other essential items. Research indicates that cash transfers, particularly those delivered via mobile money, can be more cost-efficient than the logistical complexities associated with in-kind aid. Furthermore, CVA can inject much-needed capital into local markets, thereby stimulating economic activity and fostering positive interactions between displaced populations and host communities. Notably, the provision of cash assistance has been shown to reduce the likelihood of vulnerable individuals resorting to harmful coping mechanisms such as survival sex or child labour. The increasing adoption of CVA is also driven by a consensus among donors and implementing organizations regarding its efficiency and the enhanced agency it provides to those affected by crises.

Effective CVA programs are underpinned by core principles that prioritize the dignity and choice of recipients, ensure efficient delivery, and support local markets. By providing cash or vouchers, humanitarian actors respect the autonomy of individuals to make decisions that



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best suit their circumstances. This approach allows people to address their needs in a manner that preserves their self-respect and agency. Moreover, cash transfers can often be the swiftest and most economical means of reaching populations in crisis. When implemented in contexts with functioning markets, CVA enables beneficiaries to purchase goods and services locally, thereby bolstering the local economy and fostering its recovery.

The significance of CVA extends beyond meeting basic needs; it plays an increasingly vital role in addressing diverse humanitarian challenges and achieving specific protection outcomes. UNHCR's strategic direction emphasizes the expanded use of CVA across various sectors, including shelter, water and sanitation (WASH), education, and health, to enhance assistance and protection for vulnerable populations. Furthermore, CVA has demonstrated its potential to contribute to critical protection outcomes, such as preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) and safeguarding children. The Global Protection Cluster actively advocates for the appropriate and safe use of CVA in humanitarian settings to maximize its protective benefits while mitigating potential risks. Notably, the concept of Cash for Protection (C4P) has emerged as a targeted intervention strategy that utilizes CVA to directly address the specific protection needs of individuals and households facing heightened risks or ongoing protection concerns. This report aims to analyze the survey results provided by SSRC within this broader context of CVA in humanitarian action, offering expert insights and recommendations to further strengthen their programming.

Main Findings

1.1 Research Objective

- To identify Gaps and Challenges Facing SSRC in Scaling up CVA program.
- To review and determine SSRC Institutional Capacities to implement CVA (SOP, FSP contract, Staff and volunteer capacity, funds, Coordination and Strengthen Post Distribution Monitoring).

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- To understand other SSRC sectoral program (WASH, Health and Protection) willingness and buy-in in integrating CVA into their Programming.

1.2 Research Question

- What are the gaps and Challenges facing SSRC in scaling up CVA program?
- What are the SSRC institutional Capabilities in implementing CVA?
- How other departments buy-in and willingness to integrate CVA program as one of their departmental/sectoral response options?
- To identify Gaps and Challenges Facing SSRC in Scaling up CVA program.

Executive Summary

The survey results provided by SSRC offer a valuable snapshot of the current state and perceptions surrounding their Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) program. The findings indicate a generally positive foundation, with most respondents believing the current distribution system works at least somewhat well and demonstrates a strong understanding and optimistic outlook towards CVA. Inter-agency coordination is also perceived favourably by a significant proportion of respondents. However, the data also highlights key areas requiring attention, particularly concerning the integration of CVA into protection sectors, internal coordination between protection and CVA teams, and the mitigation of potential risks, especially within protection strategies. The primary challenges identified include the risk of further harm or exploitation to vulnerable populations, difficulties in tracking the use of funds, insufficient community awareness and buy-in, potential misalignment with existing protection strategies, and capacity gaps.

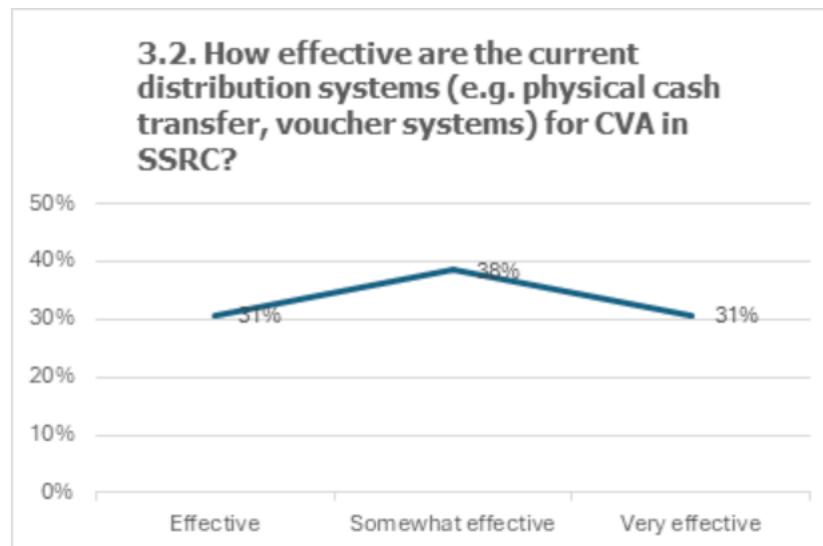
To address these challenges and further enhance the effectiveness and impact of SSRC's CVA initiatives, this report offers a series of recommendations centred on strengthening inter-agency collaboration, improving internal coordination, prioritizing staff training and capacity building, developing customized guidelines for sector integration, enhancing community engagement, and ensuring robust risk management frameworks are in place. By

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strategically focusing on these areas, SSRC can build upon its existing strengths and further optimize its CVA programming to better serve vulnerable populations.

3.1. How familiar are you with Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) as a modality for humanitarian assistance?	Frequency	percentage
Somewhat Familiar	2	15%
Very Familiar	11	85%
Grand Total	13	100%

The results showed that while 15% of respondents had some familiarity with cash and voucher assistance as a kind of humanitarian aid, 85% of respondents had a very good understanding of the concept.



The results show that 31% of people think the current distribution system works, 38% think it works somewhat, and 31% think it works very well (physical cash transfer, voucher systems).

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3.3. How effective is the coordination between SSRC and other humanitarian actors (e.g., UN agencies, other NGOs, government) in delivering CVA programs?

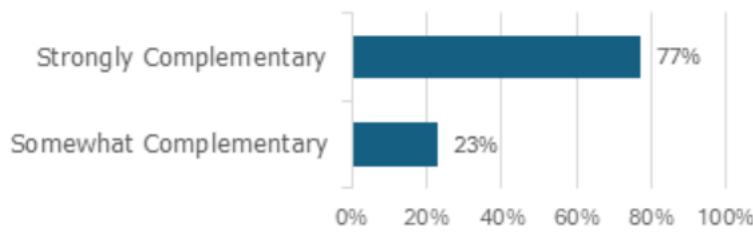


Research shows that when asked about the level of coordination between SSRC and other humanitarian organizations in delivering CVA programs, 31% of respondents said it was excellent, 38% said it was good, and 31% said it was moderate.

3.4. How do you view the potential for integrating CVA into your sector's programs?	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	5	38%
Very positive	8	62%
Grand Total	13	100%

According to the results, when asked about the possibility of incorporating CVA into other sectors, 62% of respondents had a very optimistic outlook, and 38% had a positive outlook.

3.5. To what extent do you feel that CVA could complement your sector's current interventions (Protection)?



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CVA has the potential to supplement the protection present initiatives in such as supporting SGBV survivors, Restoring Family Link and other protection related issues according to 77% of respondents, while 23% indicated that it is somewhat complimentary.

3.6. How do you see CVA supporting the protection needs of vulnerable populations (e.g., gender-based violence survivors, children, displaced persons)?	Frequency	percentage
Neutral	1	8%
Somewhat Supportive	1	8%
Very Supportive	11	84%
Grand Total	13	100%

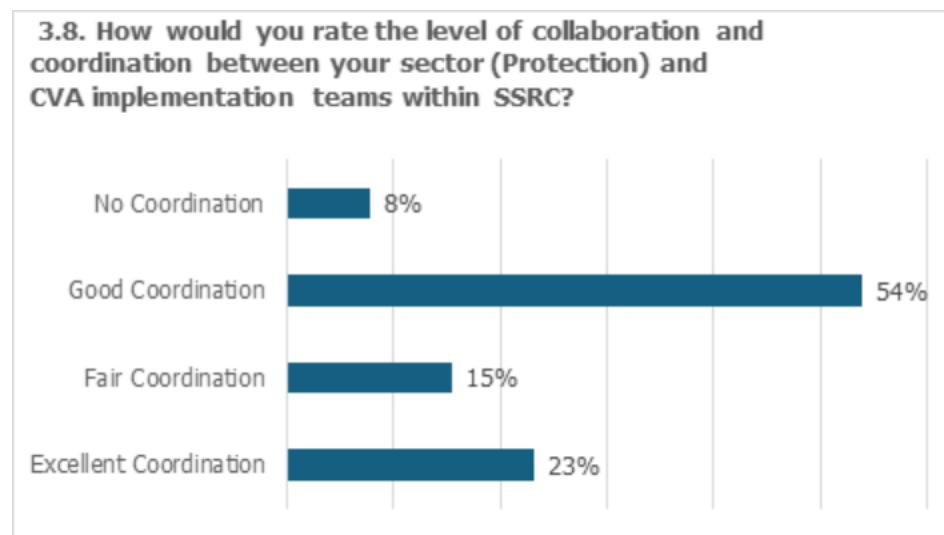
The findings indicate that, 84% of respondents reported very supportive about CVA supporting the protection needs of vulnerable populations (e.g, gender-based violence survivors, children, displaced persons), 8% of respondents reported somewhat supportive about CVA supports to protection needs and 8% of respondents reported neutral about CVA supports to protection needs.

3.7. What concerns or risks might arise from integrating CVA into protection programming?	Frequency	Percentage
Risk of further harm or exploitation to vulnerable populations	6	26%
Difficulty in tracking the use of funds	6	26%
Insufficient community awareness and buy-in	6	26%
Misalignment with existing protection strategies	5	22%
Other (please specify): _____	0	0%
Total	23	100%

The findings show that 26% of respondents reported a risk of further harm or exploitation to vulnerable populations, 26% reported difficulty tracking the use of funds, 26% reported insufficient community awareness and buy-in, and 22% reported misalignment with existing

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protection strategies, all of which are concerns or risks associated with incorporating CVA into protection strategies.



54% of respondents indicated that the level of collaboration and coordination between the protection and CVA implementation teams within the SSRC is good coordination, while 23% reported excellent coordination, 15% reported fair coordination, and 8% reported no coordination.

3.9. What specific support would your sector require to successfully integrate CVA into existing programs?	Frequency	Percentage
Capacity building and training on CVA	3	23%
Development of tailored guidelines for CVA integration	2	15%
Increased resources or funding for integration	1	8%
Joint planning and coordination with CVA teams	7	54%
Total	13	100%

According to 23% of respondents, increasing capacity and providing training on CVA will increase the success of integrating CVA into current programs; 15% of respondents said that customized guidelines for CVA integration would be necessary; 8% said that more funding or resources for integration would be necessary; and 54% said that collaborative planning and

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coordination with the CVA team would be necessary to ensure successful integration for CVA existing programs.

3.10. How can CVA help to improve overall program delivery across sectors (Protection)?	Frequency	Percentage
Enhances holistic support to vulnerable populations	5	38%
Improve efficiency by reducing in-kind assistance	5	38%
Provides more flexible and responsive assistance	3	23%
Total	13	100%

According to the results, 38% of respondents said that improving holistic support for vulnerable populations had improved the overall program delivery across sectors; 38% said that improving efficiency by reducing in-kind assistance had improved the overall program delivery across sectors; and 23% said that more flexible and responsive assistance had been provided.

What would encourage your sector to prioritize integrating CVA into its programming?	Frequency	Percentage
Strong leadership support	5	18%
Demonstrated success of CVA in similar programs	8	29%
More training and capacity building for staff	10	36%
Funding earmarked for CVA integration	5	18%
Other (please specify): _____	0	0%
Total	28	100%

According to the results, 18% of respondents think that the sector should prioritize incorporating CVA into its programming by having strong leadership support; 29% think that CVA has been shown to be successful in similar programs; 36% think that the sector should prioritize incorporating CVA into its programming by giving staff members more training and capacity building; and 18% think that funding has been set aside for CVA integration.

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Conclusion

The analysis of SSRC's survey data reveals a generally positive landscape for Cash and Voucher Assistance programming within the organization. Respondents demonstrate a strong understanding of CVA and hold an optimistic view regarding its potential for broader integration across sectors. Inter-agency cooperation is also perceived favourably. However, the findings also highlight critical areas that require focused attention. These include the need to enhance internal coordination between protection and CVA teams, proactively address and mitigate the risks associated with integrating CVA into protection strategies, and ensure that the key requirements for successful integration, such as collaborative planning, staff training, and customized guidelines, are adequately addressed.

The perceived positive impact of CVA on holistic support, efficiency, and flexibility underscores its value as a core modality for humanitarian assistance delivery within SSRC. Finally, the factors identified as driving CVA prioritization, particularly staff training and evidence of success, provide valuable insights for future strategic planning and resource allocation. The strategic implications of these findings suggest that SSRC has a solid foundation upon which to further expand and optimize its CVA programming. By strategically addressing the identified areas for improvement and leveraging the existing strengths and positive perceptions, SSRC can significantly enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of its humanitarian work, ultimately leading to better outcomes for the vulnerable populations it serves.