

**Looking back to move forward:
Building on learning from 2011 to strengthen the
2017 drought response in Somalia**

Report from an inter-agency reflection workshop

Report by CaLP, May 2017

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1 Introduction

This report provides a summary of the discussions that took place during a half-day reflection workshop in May 2017. More than 40 people from national and international NGOs, the UN, donors and research organisations came together to consider lessons from the 2011 drought response, reflect on the use of cash transfer programming (CTP) in the current response and agree actions to strengthen existing work.

The half-day workshop was convened by CaLP and the Somalia Cash Working Group (CWG). It was co-facilitated by the Centre for Humanitarian Change and CaLP. This report documents key discussions and proposed next steps.

2 Highlights

- a) Much has changed between 2011 and 2017 in terms of the use of CTP in humanitarian response in Somalia. In 2011, there were delays as some agencies sought to make the case for cash. Today, few organisations challenge the appropriateness of CTP.
- b) The CTP response is progressing faster and at greater scale than in 2011. There is a commitment to strengthen work further.
- c) The rapid scale-up of the response has been made possible by the commitment of donors and implementing agencies to using cash; the fact that CTP capacities exist at different levels; improved (though still limited) access; and improved coordination.
- d) The current Somalia CWG was re-established in mid-February 2017 after some CTP decisions had already been made¹. Once re-established, the CWG moved quickly to address a range of issues.
- e) Despite the rapid scale-up of the response, the risk of famine remains in some areas and new risks are emerging in relation to health and epidemics. There is need to review and adjust response plans to take account of changing needs.
- f) In 2011 payments were made via hawala². Mobile penetration has since increased and many agencies are now making transfers via mobile. The move to mobile transfers has reduced some risks but also added new risks and opportunities.
- g) Information gathered via the 3Ws (who does what where) needs to be improved to increase its value. While a considerable amount of data is being generated, it is unclear how much it is being used to inform changes to the response.
- h) Risks exist related to diversion, targeting and exclusion of minorities. There is no common risk framework and agencies are rarely open about their own capacities and problems. Information sharing could be a first step towards tackling risk collectively.
- i) Accountability to affected populations has improved but is biased towards feedback mechanisms. There is need to expand the focus to include affected populations at all stages of response planning and implementation.
- j) The presence of established programmes and consortia supported the rapid scale-up of the response. However, their presence also affected targeting which, to an extent, followed existing footprints rather than necessarily reaching those in greatest need.
- k) Targeting has been largely informed by IPC classifications. Some vulnerable groups are excluded and adjustments are needed to reflect changing vulnerabilities. New approaches are needed to reach minorities and those in hard to reach areas.

Next steps include:

- Invest in local as well as national coordination; work together to achieve economies of scale; harmonise M&E; agree minimum standards where appropriate; strengthen overall accountability to affected populations.
- Strengthen analysis and use of available data; increase engagement with clusters: review targeting; be creative in identifying and targeting vulnerable groups; improve gender analysis and planning; adjust response plans to meet emerging needs/risks.
- Develop a collective approach to identifying and managing key risks; contextualise risks based on local knowledge; anticipate new and emerging risks as well as managing existing risks. Create space for honest dialogue between donors, implementing agencies and communities about risk and risk sharing.
- Plan for on-going gathering, sharing and using of lessons rather than waiting until after the response. Feed learning into the development of common standards for future cash programming.

¹ Some felt that if a CWG had been in existence in earlier some decisions might have been different e.g. decisions about cash values might have been harmonised earlier and the approach to targeting might have been different.

² A hawala is an informal value transfer system based on the performance and honor of a network of money brokers.

3 Somalia context

A few points about the drought response context in 2017:

- Parts of Somalia were responding to drought in 2016 and, in a few areas, as far back to the post-Gu 2015.
- The gravity of the deteriorating situation became clear in late 2016 and crystallised in January 2017 when FSNAU published its post-Deyr assessment which indicated the number of people in IPC phases 3 and 4 had increased from 1.1 million to nearly 3 million within 6 months – see <http://www.fsnau.org/fsnau-in-focus>.
- Many agencies had on-going programmes in Somalia, some involving CTP.
- CTP forms a major part of the 2017 response.
- While the first cash transfers using ‘new’ humanitarian funding started in February 2017, the drought response was on-going earlier at a sub-national level with some actions involving CTP.
- Although there have been active CWGs in the past, there was no functioning CWG in 2016. WFP and CaLP initiated the formation of a new CWG which met for the first time on 17th February 2017.
- In March, CaLP produced a review of recommendations and lessons based on evaluations of the use of CTP in the 2011 drought response.

4 Differences between 2011 and 2017

Participants who were involved in the 2011 response reflected on some of the major differences in context between then and now as follows:

2011	2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many concerns about cash: fear of dependency syndrome; high resistance to the use of cash (a reflection of where cash was at the time plus concerns about the risks related to AS); high risk aversion by donors and agencies • Huge access issues • Lots of delays and procrastination • WFP was not doing cash; UNICEF supported partners but did not manage CTP directly • Concerns about inflation, targeting, access • Coordination was problematic • Monitoring systems were immature, on the ground verification was challenging • Markets continued almost everywhere and – contrary to some people’s fears. • Low levels of diversion reported e.g. surveys found 5.8% - 11% of cash distributed was diverted (some feel it was under-reported) • Risk management given attention, with a joint risk matrix. • A strong cash and voucher monitoring group existed. • There were challenges related to re-targeting. • Unclear if the investment in targeting was warranted given the nature of the crisis and the Somalia culture of sharing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of cash is no longer a debate – a commitment to the modality exists. • Access is better. • Better coordination. • Systems/capacities were in place prior to the onset of the drought – this made scale-up possible. • Civil society is stronger, local NGOs now have core systems. This provides a more realistic platform of actors through who aid can be channeled. • Things have moved faster. There was earlier commitment both by donors and agencies leading to quicker response. • Better monitoring systems (by some) for diversion. • More Government involvement (e.g. national and local drought committees) bringing opportunities and challenges • Diversion remains a fact. • Once cash is given, how is it spent? Is it achieving the planned change? • New challenges exist and emerging e.g. methods of registration and use of GPS. • Understanding of markets has improved and people expect they will work

5 Reviewing our current performance

Three questions provided the focus for discussion:

- If our collective performance is evaluated in 6 months' time, how do you think it will be assessed?
- What are the big risks? How are we managing them collectively?
- What are the next big issues we need to address in order to deliver quality cash based programming?

The reflections and issues arising from these discussions are summarised below.

Accountability

- a) Accountability to affected populations has improved but remains limited. Call centers are well established but not everyone has access e.g. for Scope, you can only call the hotline if you are a beneficiary.

Access

- a) Access limitations mean there is too much focus on urban populations.
- b) Is the focus on urban areas justified? Need to find ways of reaching more people in rural areas, this should be possible in some places – especially in the north.
- c) In 2011 Al Shabaab prevented people moving. Today, access is better and assistance is distributed closer to where people reside. People have moved shorter distances and there have been fewer deaths due to walking less long distances.
- d) Access is usually framed as a South issue but access problems can arise elsewhere as well. Are we for instance ignoring potential access issues for Northern Inland Pastoralists?

Coordination

- a) Inconsistent co-ordination between 2011 and 2017. The current CWG was established after some CTP decisions were made. It is now working well but should have been operating earlier.
- b) Coordination has steadily improved at all levels both inside and outside the country. Need to continue to strengthen and improve inter-sector dialogue.
- c) Was the portrayal of the reach of agencies in 2016 accurate? Did this affect views of preparedness and coverage?
- d) Standing agreements (between agencies and between agencies and financial service providers) might have helped preparedness.
- e) CWG analysis must be at district level to provide an accurate picture of coverage and allow for local coordination.
- f) How do plans link to social safety nets, graduation models, etc?
- g) Government involvement and engagement has increased, this has had positive and challenging implications.
- h) How will CTP coordination continue after the emergency, how can the CWG be sustained between emergencies?
- i) Need for continual systemization/harmonisation of transfer values – whether in crisis or not.

Diversion

- a) Local partners are stronger and have more capacity than before.
- b) In 2011 diversion risks were higher, there were more small partners, the situation was lawless and anyone could declare themselves an NGO. This is not the case anymore.
- c) What happened to the discussions about gatekeepers which was so important in 2011?
- d) Diversion remains a big risk but are we clear what diversion means in Somalia in 2017? What are the issues regarding:
 - o Gatekeepers? Who are they in the current context?
 - o Protection; agents; mobile companies; shadow currency, transaction costs?
 - o Social and Government taxation?
 - o Repayment of debts, loans, the cost of access?
 - o How effective is PDM at collecting information on these issues?
- e) Need for collective standards.

- f) Have risks reduced with the increased use of mobile money or just changed?
- g) Lack of financial regulation.

Financial service providers

- a) Shift from hawala to mobile transfers.
- b) Too much money being managed via too few service providers?
- c) Potential for collective bargaining with financial service providers? Are we stuck on bureaucracy/unwilling to share good deals?
- d) Differentiation between US Dollars (mobile transactions) and Somali shillings. Should we transition to shillings?
- e) Mobile transfers are easier to manage and monitor but they may not reach all in need.
- f) Working towards cardless systems?

Impact

- a) Despite rapid response, there may still be a risk of famine in some areas and new risks are emerging in relation to health and epidemics. Emphasis may need to shift from food security to other sectors.
- b) Need to consider and adjust response to ensure appropriateness – taking account of needs, context and modalities
- c) Culture of sharing – everybody is fed but nobody has enough. Implications? What should be done?
- d) Displacement has not been prevented (was that ever the intention?). One traditional coping strategy is to split families. When we give cash, are people able to send cash back to their families?
- e) There have been some challenges in terms of speed versus accuracy of response.
- f) Have we mobilised the right response? Sectors?
- g) Need for advocacy to donors regarding the Minimum Expenditure Basket as the basis for transfer value recommendations.
- h) Are we giving displacement enough consideration in our targeting?

Information, evidence and learning

- a) Need for more exchange on what works at field level.
- b) Better M&E systems needed.
- c) How do we use existing information and experience from cash programming?
- d) Market studies exist but are we using them enough?
- e) Need for collective research – both development and humanitarian.
- f) Better integrated information management would help in many areas.
- g) 3W is underreported and not yet harmonized. Better information needed from other sectors, not just food security. Donors should require completion of data to ensure it is done (good data will help address risks related to coverage, inclusion etc).

Risk management

- a) Multiple risks including targeting, diversion, monitoring, exclusion, local partners.
- b) No common risk management matrix. Some fears that a common risk management could bring a danger of managing based on the lowest common denominator.
- c) Working with Government makes it difficult to question targeting.
- d) Many issues relate to the capacities and responses of individual agencies. Difficult to have concrete discussions around risks if we cannot share openly. We need to be better at sharing information and monitoring findings, this can be a first step towards tackling risk management collectively.
- e) Culture of not admitting to serious problems and accepting fault. This hampers risk management.
- f) Lack of effective dialogue between donors, agencies and communities.
- g) Risk Management Unit has helped to vet NGO partners.
- h) Rationalization within the clusters has helped with risk management.

Speed of response / preparedness

- a) Overall, quicker response than in 2011.
- b) Views about cash programming have changed – cash is now recognised as an appropriate modality in Somalia.
- c) Donor funding is available. Large scale-up has already taken place.

- d) Some donors have seen that agencies are pushing themselves, working on the basis of funding commitments and using internal funds to act quickly even before contracts are finalised.
- e) While individual organisations have built capacities, there was little/no coordinated cash preparedness in 2016.
- f) FSNAU kept information flowing but drought triggers were not responded to. We need to ensure we don't let good systems disappear post famine. Consider approaching donors of FSNAU to expand funding to institutionalise preparedness e.g. use new Ministry on Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management.

Targeting, coverage, inclusion and duplication

- a) Overall, targeting has improved and there is broader coverage.
- b) World Bank is trying to work through government systems but what is the geographic coverage?
- c) Are we reaching the most vulnerable?
- d) Should we consider blanket targeting as per 2011 recommendations?
- e) Food security and nutrition maps look different, what does that mean for targeting?
- f) Continued inclusion/exclusion issues due to clan dynamics – the most vulnerable might not be targeted due to clan affiliations.
- g) Are we considering the effects of cash programming as a pull factor?
- h) Some groups are excluded e.g. based on geography, gender, age.
- i) Issues exist related to mistargeting and multiple registrations.
- j) Need to reach vulnerable populations in hard to access areas. Are agencies willing to try new ways of reaching people? Will donors support and share the risks?
- k) Exclusion of "invisible" groups e.g. newly displaced become minority groups in new areas. How do we find and assist them? Need better outreach to understand gaps at local level and assist marginalised groups e.g. targeting split families with members in inaccessible areas as a way to reach those previously not reached.
- l) The impact of displacement on response effectiveness was not included in the original plan. Are we adapting enough?
- m) How effective are we at re-targeting? Are we doing enough to adjust as the situation changes and new vulnerabilities emerge or become apparent?
- n) The consortia/agency groupings helped with rapid scale-up but this may have negatively affected some targeting as too focused on the geographic/population footprint that the consortia/groups already had.
- o) Some clan analysis is done to reduce risks regarding exclusion but it is not systematic. BRICS is doing it, SOMrep a little and RCRC movement working with Somali Red Crescent through trainings on targeting.

Technology

- a) Greater use of technology e.g. financial providers, registration systems (biometrics).
- b) Use of mobile money is much larger today - how is that impacting performance?
- c) Opportunities to improve efficiency further.

6 Next steps

The following actions were identified (in not order of priority). Time did not for a discussion of who should take forward each action but, based on existing roles and discussions which took place during group work, many of the tasks have been provisionally assigned. It is recommended that the table is reviewed and updated by the CWG.

Action	Actions to be taken forward in collaboration with the CWG
Improve the ways we work together	
1. Invest in local coordination, including training related to coordination if needed	OCHA with support as needed
2. Take forward collective action in relation to:	
o Approach to/negotiating with service providers	CWG sub group or donors
o Collective review of information e.g. FSNAU data	CWG
o Work on (i) Registration (though beyond cash alone), (ii) M&E (iii) accountability	CWG to establish sub groups
3. Continue to strengthen engagement between the 'big groupings' of actors (consortia, UN,	Groupings to be involved in each

RCRC Movement)	sub group
4. Improve preparedness/response planning and act on it	CWG
5. Donors should give emphasis to sharing of organizational lessons learned	Donors
6. Recirculate CWG Terms of Reference and review/update as needed	CWG Chair
Use information to improve the response	
7. Harmonise M&E tools & agree minimum standards to allow collective response analysis.	CWG sub group
8. Understand more about multi sector and different modality approaches.	To be confirmed
9. Encourage participation of clusters in CWG and get more accurate information from clusters/working groups.	CWG and OCHA
10. Move beyond data collection and give more focus to analysis and use of data for decisions making.	CWG agenda to reflect this, plus action by individual agencies
11. Get regular feedback from communities and involve them in programme design.	CWG sub group plus individual agencies
12. Targeting (a) Be creative in identifying beneficiaries (e.g. mass media) and (b) rethink targeting to improve inclusion of marginalised groups.	Add to agenda for discussion at CWG
13. Strengthen field level reflection/lessons learning and use lessons for retargeting and identifying people in most need.	Local coordination structures with support as needed
14. Improve gender analysis and programming.	All agencies.
15. Link drought response CTP to self-help groups and resilience.	All agencies as possible
16. As needs change, adjust the response to include more focus on health, WASH and shelter.	All agencies
Manage risks	
17. Develop collective risk management approach based on (a) Collectively identifying, understanding and prioritising risks (b) Contextualise risks based on local knowledge (c) Identify/anticipate new and emerging risks – do not just focus on existing risks	CWG sub group
18. Work on joint mitigation measures and guidance	CWG sub group
19. Test and pilot new ways of working to reach inaccessible areas	Consortia, UN, RC
20. Create space for honest dialogue about risk between donors, agencies and communities	CWG sub group or CaLP
Improve and use learning	
21. Base lesson learning on experience from field teams.	To be confirmed
22. Share learning regularly, not just after the response.	All agencies
23. Post assessments, evaluations, reviews etc on CaLP resource library	All agencies
24. Plan similar workshop in Mogadishu.	OCHA with support from CaLP
25. Take forward joint learning exercises and pull together lessons learned	CaLP
26. Design programmes with learning in mind.	Implementing agencies/donors
27. Localize standards as relevant and feed learning into future cash programming standards.	CWG
28. Consider need for independent empirical information.	CWG
29. Use CWG to discuss key questions.	CWG
30. Use existing systems and technologies to improve learning e.g. information from SCOPE.	Implementing agencies
31. Utilise learning from other countries.	All agencies
32. Engage with government during learning processes.	OCHA
33. Evaluate and review post crisis.	Discuss at M&E CWG sub group

Responding to point 23 above, FAO shared the following reports which have now added to the CaLP Resource Library (www.cashlearning.org/resources/library):

CCORD (2015), Final report for Assessment of the Impact of Cash for Work Beneficiaries Training (Phases IIB and IV) for FAO Somalia

FAO (2014) Post Distribution Assessment Report Phase IIB, Cash for Work

Oxford Policy Management (2014), Review of FAO Cash for Work Programme in Somalia, Summary of Findings

Oxford Policy Management (2014), Review of FAO Cash for Work Programme in Somalia, Volume III: Financial Costing by De S and Silvaleander

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