Round Table Meeting
Consultation with Members of CaLP in East Africa
Venue: ACTED, Chania Road, Opposite LER Apartments, Kilimani, Nairobi
2-5pm on 27th February 2017

Background

Post WHS and Grand Bargain Commitments, there is a strong impetus towards the scaling-up of cash transfer programming. While this is welcome news, it brings challenges both for individual organisations and the cash community as a collective.

A meeting was arranged to bring together some of CaLPs members in East Africa for a ‘roundtable’ discussion to consider regional CTP priorities. The aim will be to start to shape an agenda on which we can work together and which will inform CaLPs plans in East Africa in the coming year/s.

The meeting was intentionally small with the aim of creating a space where ideas could be shared freely and where participants could explore what needs to be done in order to develop a common vision.

Attending

Habon Hussein - ACTED
Jean Baptiste - ACTED
Mohamednur Roble - ACTED
Deqa Saleh - Adeso
Esther Mbogho - CaLP
Karen Peachey - CaLP
Mark Laichenia - Give Directly
Will Le - Give Directly
Luciana Koske - Global Communities
Carolyne Kanaiza - IRC
Sophia Kahinga - Medair
Melaku Yirga - Mercy Corps
Michael Yemene - SCI
Tita Gamechu - SCI
Ernesto Gonzalez - WFP

Introductions

Karen introduced the agenda of the meeting. The meeting was planned to create a discussion and gather thoughts from CaLP members around cash transfer programming in East Africa, the aim was to explore areas where there may be potential for collective action and, at the same time, to inform CaLP’s plans for region.

During a round of introductions people briefly stated what they expected from the meeting and shared some headline thoughts on priorities/their vision for CTP in future. Reflections included:

- Increased use of cash in the region.
- The need to strengthen coordination and have a more harmonised approach.
- Need for more advocacy.
- More data and operational research. Recognising that although a lot of evidence exists, people want country specific information as well.
• Greater focus on the effectiveness of cash, including looking at issues of financial inclusion, impact and preparedness for cash in emergencies.
• The scaling up of digital payments/e-transfers plus better sharing of database information.
• More use of multi-purpose cash.
• Recognition that many agendas are moving fast and the landscape is changing.

A brief update was provided about CaLP and some of the changes that have/are taking place:

• CaLP was initially set up by 5 organisations and focused on promoting the use of cash.
• Over time, the work has evolved. The debate is no longer about ‘why cash’ but ‘how’ – what is needed to do it well.
• Following a review of CaLP\(^1\) in 2014, various changes have been made to reflect the changing environment and how CaLP needs to adjust to respond effectively. In the last year, changes have continued and have included the recruitment of a Director, making CaLP a membership organisation (which now has over 50 members) and the revision of strategic plans.
• Membership of CaLP reflects an interest in being part of a common agenda and the need for collective action on some issues. CaLP focuses mainly on issues where there is collective benefit for the ‘cash agenda’.
• CaLP has been rather quiet in East Africa for a while but this is now being addressed. This consultation offers members an opportunity to consider opportunities for collective action and to help shape the agenda for CaLP in East Africa.

**Key Discussion Points**

The majority of the meeting was devoted to discussing what people see as cash priorities in the region and how they think it might evolve in the coming years. Key points and questions arising included:

• **Multi-purpose cash:**
  o What does multipurpose cash mean in practice?
  o There is a lot of talk on this but it is not being widely used.
  o How do we increase use of multi-purpose cash?
  o What does it mean in terms of transfer values, how much is needed to make a difference?
  o What does it mean for the way we are organised/the way we work? In practice, it may mean some of us are not needed.
  o There may be need for some collaborative work to test scalable models and really assess the impact of multi-purpose cash.

• **Scaling up cash:**
  o There is need to scale up – commitments have been made but the ‘how’ is more difficult
  o Some challenges arise as a result of cash being seen as a food security/livelihoods issue - some sectors don’t see its relevance. There is need to push for the use of cash to be integrated into other sectors – there is need for a wider perspective.
  o It seems that when we discuss CTP, people are comfortable with it. But then when we get to the point of delivery, people are not confident enough to do it or to scale up.
  o Internal barriers were cited by some as the biggest challenge to scaling up. Examples given included different perceptions of risk; need to make procurement teams more comfortable with CTP (humanitarian procurement teams know how to tender for NFIs but are less comfortable with financial service providers); concerns about the scale of funds transfers (sign offs can end up going to the bottom of the pile).
  o Institutional transformation is needed for everyone to move to CTP.

\(^1\) 2014 - A review of cash transfer programming and the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) 2005–2015 and beyond
o There are questions about the sustainability of cash but it is recognised that this is a challenge for all modalities.
o We are obsessed with idea of ‘Cash Experts’. But who went to University to become a cash expert – it’s just some people have experience. There is need to move away from thinking about cash experts to thinking about good programming. There is need for good programme managers who can adapt/work with rigour in different context.
o Need for all teams to be included in CTP planning - including Logistics, Finance, Security, HR.

• Programme quality:
o Some of the challenges we see are not really about cash per se, they are about the effectiveness of assessments, response analysis and so on.
o Need to focus on programme quality - whether with cash or in kind
o Need to avoid seeing cash as a ‘solution’ need to ensure good response analysis and ensure the use of cash is appropriateness to context.
o Need to reinforce that cash is a modality and may be one of a number of response options. A good programme requires good analysis and management – whatever the modality.
o It seems to be hard for people to move away from the idea that FSL people are the ‘cash experts’

• Evidence and learning:
o Need for more learning and documentation related to CTP.
o Learning needs to be context-specific. In some cases the evidence exists but people feel the need to see it in different contexts.
o Need to consider the cost benefit of the investments in some of the reporting requirements.
o There is need to be bold - to be ready to pilot initiatives and learn from mistakes, not just try and learn from trainings and research.
o There is scope to learn from others, spend time seeing what is being done/how – seconding staff between programmes.
o The questions raised by CTP have forced some people/organisations to think more critically about their programming – asking questions they didn’t ask about in-kind support.
o We may have over simplified some of the CTP messages. We need to be more rigorous with the information about CTP and ensure we do not over claim the benefits.
o The question of evidence may be more partly a psychological issue, people (managers/donors others) want a higher degree of reassurance than with in-kind support. This may also be linked to the need for advocacy as some donors are still not sold on CTP.

• Other points:
o In 5 years, mobile money is likely to be the most preferred modality – indeed it is already strongly used in some countries in the region.
o We should invest in markets, there is need to better understand the impact of cash/non cash in different contexts.
o There is need for more and better engagement with the private sector and to strengthen public private partnerships.
o There is need to consider issues of sequencing and layering - who should do what, when etc.

Does cash have a more transformative agenda? Or is it just about using cash instead of in-kind support?

• There is scope for cash to be more transformative as it should be easier to see how cash it is used. There is potential for it to be more transparent.
• There is need for benchmarking our cash programmes but, as with any benchmarking, there is need to be careful we compare like with like.
• Cash needs to be benchmarked in both humanitarian and development sectors.
• We need to adapt and work with local organisations, using local systems. There is danger that as big cash actors (humanitarian and private sector) move into an area that they might damage local actors and undermine systems.
• Cash can be transformative. It has potential to contribute more to the economy, it has brought with it more use of innovation and is more empowering to people.
• There is need for practitioners to learn and do more on risk management. Many fears related to CTP are about risk – there is need to better understand and manage risks.
• There is need for more donor alignment to ease reporting.
• The cost effectiveness of CTP depends on what we are comparing it to – we can’t assume it is cheaper. Some people have found CTP ends up being more expensive as it has required then to (a) become more rigorous and (b) there are often more demands in terms of accountability than with in-kind.
• There are questions about how are we can best promote/build systems though our CTP interventions and so avoid risks of undermining existing systems.
• In some contexts there are issues related to country specific financial regulations that need to be better considered.

Can we envisage scaling up multi-purpose cash?

• Cash is the next frontier - for donors as well!
• We need to explore what is causing the resistance to multi-purpose cash. Is it organisational fears related to organisational mandates; risks; control; competition ....? It could be argued that multi-purpose cash needs more robust monitoring but this is needed/can be difficult whatever the modality of support.
• There will be need for close work with governments: multi-purpose cash could work with/alongside existing systems.

Potential areas for collective action

In a discussion about potential areas for collaboration/issues that need to be strengthened to improve cash programming, the following ideas were shared (not in any order of priority):

1. Planning for use of cash in election preparedness
2. The gender impacts of cash
3. M&E for mobile payments
4. Risk management and corruption
5. Understanding when cash is an appropriate response
6. Benchmarking e.g. various aspects related delivery and cost
7. Market assessments
   o strengthening capacity
   o improving preparedness
   o harmonising approaches
   o developing minimum standards
8. Public/private partnerships – examining how best to manage them in the context of cash
9. Institutionalising cash:
   o Increasing basic capacities
   o Training and sharing learning
   o Increasing capacity develop options - not just training
10. Need to work with clusters and increase engagement/use of cash in other sectors
11. Working with financial service providers including:
   o Issues of data protection, including biometrics
   o Understanding different systems
   o Assessing how much is an appropriate fee in different contexts - 1%-5%?
12. Information management issues including:
   o Multiple different systems
13. Changing landscape
   - Who is best to do deliver cash
   - Working with Governments and private sector
   - Changing donor context e.g. requirements and ways of working
   - Involvement of the grass-root movement (interest in cash/person to person transfers) and involvement of non traditional donors

14. Current issues related to the drought

**Going forward**

The above list is long and broad. Agreed that:

- CaLP would use the above list, together with feedback from other consultative discussions, to generate an overall list of possible areas for action. These will then be shared with all members in the region via a survey monkey (within coming weeks) to get further feedback and see if there are any clear priorities.
- A further meeting will then be organised to discuss top priorities in more detail

It was noted that members could pool resources some resources to take forward specific bits of work.
Annex: Agenda

This is an indicative agenda and will change according to how discussions proceed.

14:00 – 14:10  Introductions

14:10 – 14:30  Brief update from CaLP and discussion about membership

14:30 – 16:15  CTP in East Africa: priorities now and in the coming years
   • Do we have a collective vision? Should we?
   • What are the big sector wide issues?
   • What issues would benefit from collective action?
   • Are there things CaLP should do outside of this collective agenda?

16:15 – 17:00  How to take this forward

Ahead of the meeting, you may find it useful to:
   • Consider what are the big issues of concern re CTP in your organisation and which you feel are common across the sector
   • Review the WHS commitments and some associated analysis e.g. www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861
   • Read CaLP’s draft strategy (copy attached but please note adjustments are still being made and this is not for wider circulation)