



TESTING NEW GROUND

MULTISECTOR CASH INTERVENTIONS IN MANGAIZE REFUGEE CAMP, NIGER

CaLP Case Study

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A Case Study on Multisector cash interventions in Mangaize refugee camp, Niger

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS

AGR	Activité génératrice de revenus
APBE	Action Pour Le Bien Etre
ASUSU	Microfinance Institution in Niger
CaLP	The Cash Learning Partnership
CBI	Cash-based intervention
CDM	Common Delivery Mechanism
Franc CFA	West African CFA (Communauté Financière d'Afrique) Franc
CFS	Safety Net Unit/Cellule Filets Sociaux
CNE	Commission Nationale d'Eligibilité
COP	Community of Practice
CWG	Cash Working Group
DNPGCCA	Dispositif National pour la Prévention et la Gestion des Catastrophes et des Crises Alimentaires
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
FSP	Financial Service Provider
MEB	Minimum expenditure basket
MPG	Multipurpose cash grant
MSMA	Multisector Market Assessment
NFI	Non Food Item
NFIplus	NFI, shelter and hygiene
SN	Safety Net or Social Safety Net
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
ZAR	Zone d'Accueil des Réfugiés

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the midst of the Mali refugee crisis in Niger, UNHCR implemented one of the first multisector cash transfer projects in Mangaize refugee camp in 2015, providing refugees with grants covering non-food items, hygiene, shelter and livelihood needs. The cash project came on the heels of a successful food voucher program in the same camp implemented jointly with WFP. The voucher program demonstrated the appropriateness and feasibility of cash transfers in a refugee setting. This led to the development of UNHCR's innovative multisector cash project in Mangaize. With little experience in cash, common sense and a strong country team, UNHCR developed a successful multisector cash project in combination with other support mechanisms to stimulate refugees capabilities to become self-sufficient.

Good practices demonstrated by the project and appropriate to the context include alignment with national social protection systems as an exit strategy for humanitarian caseloads. The key challenges to operationalising multisector and multipurpose cash in the region include gaps in strategic leadership and coordination, situation analysis, market analysis, and risk mitigation. Opportunities include leveraging increasingly integrated partnerships, and investing in new technologies such as mobile money.

UNHCR's experience in Mangaize holds important lessons for the agency's transition from multisector cash to multipurpose cash in refugee settings. It can facilitate a broader introduction of multipurpose cash by the cash community of practice across Niger and the West Africa region.

Disclaimers

The case study only focused on UNHCR and partner activities in Mangaize camp, Niger. It did not look into other activities conducted previously by other agencies that may have been in the form of a Cash Transfer, nor did it look at other current actors in the camp.

The case study focused on UNHCR's cash-based responses in Mangaize camp. These responses do not cover education, protection and health.

The case study is in a refugee camp context – distinct from other humanitarian contexts in the region where cash is being given to affected areas and people. The legal context and status of refugees makes it more challenging to support them through local mechanisms.

All pictures in this case study have been taken by the refugees themselves.

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I HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

I.1 MPG CONCEPT AND UNHCR TOOLKIT

Multipurpose cash grants are unrestricted cash transfers¹ that place beneficiary choice and prioritisation of needs at the forefront of the response effort. Multisector cash grants, the antecedents to multipurpose grants, may be conditional or unconditional and cover a range of needs, but are designed and managed in a traditional sectoral way.² While cash and vouchers have been used on a routine basis in emergency humanitarian response for over 10 years, the large majority has been sectoral cash delivered to meet a specific objective around one or more basic needs such as shelter, livelihoods or food security.

The large-scale response to the ongoing Iraq and Syria humanitarian crisis has seen the emergence of a new kind of assistance at scale: multipurpose cash grants or MPGs. In the Middle East response, factors including use of ready infrastructure to deliver transfers safely and efficiently – including common e-delivery mechanisms such as OneCard³ – and establishment of interagency forums such as the Lebanon Cash Consortium⁴, has enabled actors to coordinate and deliver multipurpose cash assistance at scale for the first time.

The *Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants*, developed in 2015 by UNHCR and its partners, is the first practical guidance proposed for assessing feasibility, conceptualising design and structuring implementation of MPGs. Preparedness planning and coordination also figure prominently in the approach.

In Niger UNHCR is one of the only agencies implementing multisector cash-based programming as a first step towards an MPG. In other parts of the world, the MPG concept has not yet been adopted in a coordinated and scaled manner due to constraints and limitations of infrastructure, knowledge and political commitment. The cash commitments contained in the consensus Grand Bargain document⁵ that came out of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit reflect the important strategic challenges still associated with multisector cash.⁶

¹ As per CaLP's definitions an **Unconditional Transfer**: Unconditional transfers are provided to beneficiaries without the recipient having to do anything in return in order to receive the assistance. **Unrestricted Transfer**: Unrestricted transfers can be used entirely as the recipient chooses i.e. there are no restrictions on how the transfer is spent.

² Per the CaLP, a **multisector cash transfer** is a coordinated approach to cash transfers whereby a range of sector needs are addressed through CTP, possibly using one delivery mechanism, but otherwise managing the program in the traditional way (sectoral definition of targeting, sectoral calculation of cash amount, sectoral indicators for reporting etc.). A **Multipurpose Cash Grant** (MPG) also referred to as Multipurpose Cash Transfer (MPT) is defined as a transfer (either regular or one-off) corresponding to the amount of money a household needs to cover, fully or partially, a set of basic and/or recovery needs. MPGs or MPTs are by definition unrestricted cash transfers. The MPG will contribute to meeting the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB), but can also include other one-off/recovery needs.

³ www.cashlearning.org/resources/library/814-evaluation-of-the-onecard-pilot-in-lebanon

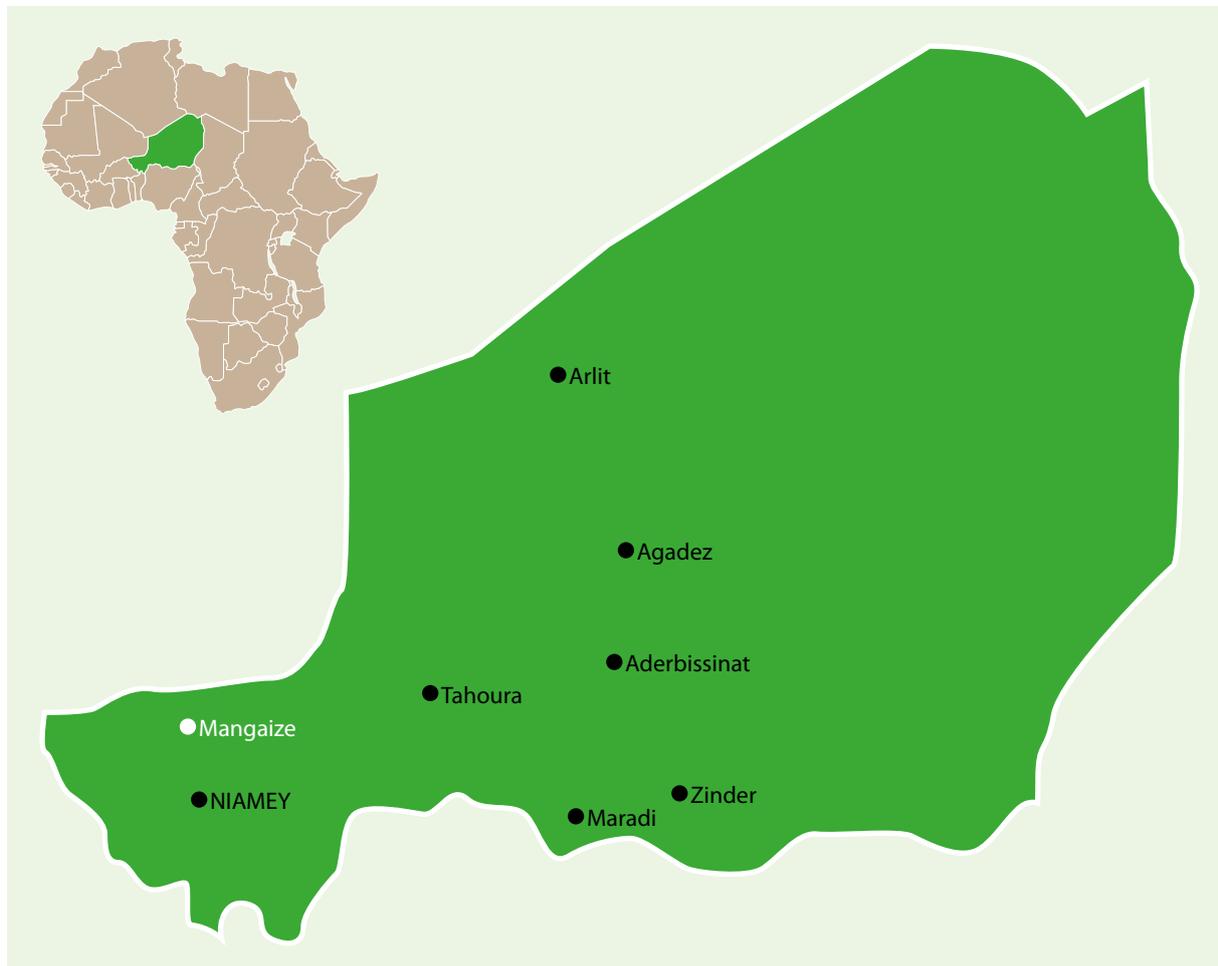
⁴ lebanoncashconsortium.org

⁵ consultations2.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_finance/hlphumanitarianfinancing

⁶ See CaLP's reaction to the Grand Bargain statement: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/blog/2016/05/the-cash-bargain-travelling-between-aspirations-and-possibilities>

I.2 REGIONAL AND COUNTRY CONTEXT

Figure 1: Map of Niger



The Sahel in West Africa is characterised by inflationary, speculative markets and chronic food and nutrition crises that affect some 20 million people annually.⁷ Low agricultural production and systematically poor rainfall compound the bleak food and nutrition insecurity situation for vulnerable households. Epidemics and disease such as cholera and meningitis represent another chronic threat to the Sahel region. In 2014, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone confronted the worst Ebola outbreak in history, with over 11,000 confirmed deaths and billions of dollars in economic losses resulting from the impacts of the epidemic.

Beyond the chronic threats of food insecurity, malnutrition and epidemics, violent conflict and insecurity is generating large-scale displacement and suffering in the region. The UNOCHA estimated that as of January 2016 there were over 2.7 million people (1.5 million children) displaced in Lake Chad Basin as a result of the crisis in the north and east of Nigeria. The conflict in Mali has also resulted in a number of IDPs and refugees in neighbouring countries. High levels of insecurity in northern Mali and northeast Nigeria are hampering the population's access to humanitarian aid in those areas.

In the Sahel, cash transfers have been a delivery modality for food assistance since 2001. Backed by major humanitarian donors, unconditional cash transfers are now widely used as the preferred option for responding to seasonal food crises. Donors and development agencies increasingly promote cash transfers in national plans to tackle poverty and develop social protection policies and strategies, including government safety net mechanisms.

⁷ CaLP 2015. Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) Strategy in West Africa, January 2015 – December 2016: 'Cash preparedness and response are more effective at meeting the diverse needs of affected people and communities in West Africa'. September 2015

For example, ECHO funds a seasonal food assistance response in the region through NGO/WFP Alliances, which are increasingly linked to nascent government safety net mechanisms. Very poor households hosting children 6–23 months and PLW are receiving 3 to 5 monthly distributions made up of a household ration and supplementary foods. In 2016, 97 percent of these household rations are delivered with a cash-based modality, representing nearly EUR 40 million gross.⁸

Similarly, in 2015 the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Niger delivered cash-based food assistance in the West Africa region valued at over US\$ 50 million.⁹ In Niger, the WFP assists Malian and Nigerian refugees as well as displaced, host and chronically vulnerable populations through conditional and unconditional cash-based assistance valued at nearly US\$ 15 million, 95 percent of which is distributed in direct cash, in addition to in-kind food assistance. A full 30 percent of the cash-based assistance in WFP operations in West Africa takes place in Niger, while the West African region accounts for 7 percent of the global cash-based assistance expenditure.¹⁰

In Niger, the national food crisis and disaster prevention and management mechanism¹¹ has helped to implement cash transfers on a large scale, facilitated by a favourable institutional framework and the launch of a national social safety net program supported by the World Bank.¹²

Regional and country challenges to multisector and multipurpose cash programmes at scale persist and include: poor preparedness, weak coordination and experience sharing, low and uneven levels of knowledge and capacity due to relatively recent introduction of cash-based interventions in the area, and a heavy reliance on sectoral cash.

In the view of one major humanitarian donor, the quality of response analysis delivered by actors to justify cash – particularly on markets and the appropriateness and feasibility of cash for nutrition, health and education – is not yet adequate to support multisector cash at scale. Related to this, the chronic and long term nature of seasonal food crises in the region has led to a humanitarian culture that by some accounts is entrenched, resistant to change and less well prepared for using cash in acute crisis situations. Remote landlocked areas, relatively weak markets and absence of adequate delivery platforms complete the picture.¹³ West Africa is also lagging behind in technological advances in mobile payment, banking and transfer technologies.

Entry points for scaling multisector and multipurpose cash include emerging institutional frameworks that deliver national social safety net programming; and the new government resilience agenda.¹⁴

This case study reviews the experience of UNHCR in running a multisector cash program in Magaize refugee camp, Tillaberi region, Niger – which is among the first of its kind. It highlights gaps and emerging good practice specific to the experience and context, and sets the practice against relevant guidance from the MPG Toolkit. Potential next steps for moving towards multipurpose grants are also explored. In so doing **the study seeks to identify the key learning points for the cash community of practice in Niger and West Africa when considering the use of Multipurpose Grants (MPG) as a new programming tool.**

⁸ Jerome Bernard, ECHO Dakar, personal communication June 27, 2016

⁹ Of which ECHO supports a small proportion. Tahir Nour, WFP Dakar, personal communication July 13, 2016

¹⁰ Tahir Nour, WFP Dakar, personal communication July 8, 2016; WFP Niger Country Brief April 2016.

¹¹ Dispositif National pour la Prévention et la Gestion des Catastrophes et des Crises Alimentaires, or DNPGCCA

¹² CaLP strategy WAF 2015

¹³ CaLP strategy WAF 2015

¹⁴ The Niger government has put resilience building and social protection at the core of its development agenda. The national Nigeriens nourish Nigeriens (3N) initiative, the 2014 AGIR National Resilience Priorities (PRP) document, the National Multisectoral Nutrition Security Policy and the 2011 Social Protection Policy are building blocks of the government's long-term vision.

2 PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

This section describes the history, motivation and justification for the different cash components that UNHCR implemented in Mangaize refugee camp. It concludes with how far these interventions can be considered a Multipurpose Grant.

2.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF MANGAIZE REFUGEE CAMP

The armed conflict in northern Mali began in early 2012 followed by a coup d'état. Takeover of parts of the North by armed groups in 2014 and military incursions in 2015 displaced more than half a million people. Mangaize camp in Tillaberi region in Niger was established in May 2012 to receive Malian refugees. This is one of the three open camps through which UNHCR supports Malian refugees. UNHCR also supports Malian refugees in the capital Niamey. As of May 2016 Mangaize camp has a population of 8,786 people (1,899 families), composed mostly of Touareg and other nomadic pastoralists.¹⁵

Prospects for return are limited as the conflict in northern Mali endures, increasing pressure on host populations in Niger. Today there are still more than 60,000 Malian refugees in Niger.¹⁶ Meanwhile, donor resources for supporting the Malian refugee population are diminishing, driven by the increasing numbers of people displaced by the active presence of Boko Haram in Lake Chad region. This is creating an incentive for UNHCR to find more cost-efficient solutions to the provision of humanitarian assistance.¹⁷

The open setup of the camp is a mode that allows more relationships to develop between the refugee and the host population. It supports households to become more self-sufficient.

2.2 RATIONALE: WHAT LED UNHCR TO IMPLEMENT CASH

The responses in Mangaize were designed through common sense and intuition of senior managers in UNHCR. Most of the design happened internally through discussions and ideas that were shared between the country representative and the Senior Program Officer. Choices were motivated by a set of institutional limitations and imperatives – and informed by a context of diminishing donor resources for Malian refugees and a need to identify potential cost savings for the UNHCR program while empowering beneficiaries.

Moving from in-kind assistance to a voucher or cash-based modality was assumed to achieve cost savings; however, the cost-efficiency of the approach was not formally assessed. Usually, factors for considerations to assess viability of a shift towards cash include the coverage and costs of financial service providers, security, and other expenses compared with in-kind goods and services.

WFP voucher program

In April 2013, UNHCR and WFP launched the Cash Voucher program, replacing in-kind food assistance. WFP supplied technical expertise gathered from previous experience while UNHCR came in with protection expertise to support the design of the new program. Vouchers were chosen because of the limited delivery options available to distribute cash at the time. It was one of the first refugee operations in the West Africa to use cash or vouchers.¹⁸

Switching to a cash modality

Motivated by cost considerations, six-month delays in delivery of non-food items (NFI) and shelter kits, the poor quality of NFIs and consultations with refugees, UNHCR moved to a cash modality. From the outset, a paper voucher program for NFI, hygiene and shelter needs (hereafter referred to as 'NFIplus') was decided. In mid-2015, after refugees expressed a strong preference for cash grants, UNHCR replaced in-kind NFI, hygiene and shelter kits with an unconditional NFIplus cash transfer.¹⁹

¹⁵ UNHCR Monthly Statistics about Malian Refugees in Niger, June 2016

¹⁶ UNHCR Niger Factsheet, May 2016.

¹⁷ UNHCR Cash Pilot Project Document Mangaize, April 2015

¹⁸ Denise Brown, WFP Dakar, Personal communication June 30 2016.

¹⁹ Health and water had been initially considered for inclusion in the grant but are later removed. Vouchers were originally planned as the transfer modality but later replaced by cash.

Later a different livelihood grant was designed aimed to create an incentive for refugees to become independent and self-sufficient. A self-targeting method was devised in the form of a contract stating that refugees are to become autonomous at the end of an 18-month period of livelihood support, after which they are no longer eligible for any further assistance from UNHCR (see example of contract in Annex IV). It was designed as a pilot that would cover all the camps. See Annex II for a timeline of the project and Annex III for a breakdown of the different types of assistance provided including the objective, amount, frequency and scale.

Besides the relationship with WFP²⁰ and discussions with refugees, there was little to no mapping or consultation with other stakeholders in the design of the grants, which was very much a senior management led approach. Partners were contracted to implement ideas that had already been developed, and other actors in cash programming, or the Cash Working Group (CWG) in Niger, were not consulted.

Alignment with Niger National Safety Net Program

Starting in 2013, UNHCR facilitated voluntary returns to Mali for 9000 households through distribution of one-time grants to cover moving costs. About 30 percent returned from Mangaize camp. Living alongside the refugees were Nigeriens living in Mali who also fled the conflict. To support these 'returnees' from Mali, UNHCR approached the *Cellule Filets Sociaux*²¹ (CFS), the Nigerien government run social safety net program, supported by the World Bank, and asked the CFS to include the returnees in their support program for food insecure households, paid for by UNHCR. The returnee families received CFA 10,000 per month for 24 months, the same amount that the CFS gives to targeted households in Niger.

Though these cash transfer programs are not part of the combined support, the collaboration with the CFS started here and illustrates the basis from which UNCHR made choices on the value and duration of grants supporting refugees in Mangaize. For example the NFIplus and livelihood grant values also aligned with the CFS and were designed not to exceed the local minimum wage. UNHCR's consultation with the CFS was a cornerstone for setting the amounts for all the grants. **As per the MPG Toolkit, coordination with national safety net programs is a core best practice.**

2.2 IS MANGAIZE AN MPG?

Transfers in the Mangaize refugee camp were sectoral and multisectoral, but do not meet the standard for a multipurpose grant. The food voucher is an unconditional, sector-specific transfer. The livelihood grant is a sectoral, 'self-targeted' transfer conditioned on signing a contract. The NFIplus grant, meanwhile, is an unconditional multisector cash grant combining shelter, hygiene and NFIs, which otherwise would be stand-alone sectoral programs. They are implemented separately and the livelihood grant comes with the condition of the contract.

The combination of different grants in Mangaize camp is a first step towards an MPG, but remain sectoral and multisectoral in nature. A full MPG is more than the sum of its parts in terms of cost efficiency, flexibility, and burden on the beneficiary. The contract component adds conditionality; an MPG is by definition unconditional.

²⁰ There was a very productive relationship between the country representatives of WFP and UNHCR, a key factor in facilitating an easeful partnership.

²¹ This department falls under the prime minister's office.

3 ANALYSIS, DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

This section reviews how the situation in Mangaize was assessed to inform the design of the cash grants. It looks at the implementation choices that were made and their appropriateness and relevance to the context.

3.1 NEEDS AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Needs assessment provides an understanding of the most pressing needs of affected populations and the most affected areas and groups. Needs assessment data available to inform project design was fairly limited and focused on beneficiary preferences and risks. UNHCR and implementing partners conducted these assessments.

A two-day UNHCR multisector mission in April 2015²² sought to assess feasibility and appropriateness of cash with regard to NFI, shelter and hygiene-related needs. **Instead of assessing the full range of basic needs potentially covered by a multipurpose grant, the mission narrowed its focus to three sectors.**

Meetings with refugee representatives and camp level partners revealed a clear preference for cash over voucher and in-kind assistance by both men and women, who were assessed separately. Recurrent and one-off needs in the trio of aforementioned sectors were distinguished. **The opportunity to group needs into a single cash transfer at household level was not investigated, beyond grouping the NFI, shelter and hygiene needs into one transfer.** Nor was the potential to adjust the food voucher and combine it in the package explored. Instead, the logic of translating the value of sector-specific kits into individual transfers was followed, with specific targets for each of the individual transfers identified (men to receive the shelter grant, women the NFI and hygiene grant. Refer to Annex III for an overview of different transfers and their objectives.

The team was not aware of the MPG concept or tool. Nonetheless it took the first steps towards combining different sectors into one grant and addressed many of the considerations outlined in the MPG toolkit.

Importantly, the rapid assessment flagged security risks for beneficiaries related to carrying and saving cash. Market inflation, increased pressure on fuel resources and household level conflict were also identified as potential risks of the program. Protection risks related to beneficiary abuse and exploitation, as well as potential increase in household level conflict, were also cited but not detailed.

3.2 MARKET ASSESSMENT AND THE MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET

General and single sector market analysis was available to inform and adjust design, including a broad market study by Oxfam in July 2015²³ covering Tillaberi north region and a socio-economic study on Malian refugees by CARE and UNHCR in April 2016.²⁴ Results reinforced the findings of an earlier rapid assessment on markets conducted jointly by WFP and UNHCR in 2012 on areas in Niger hosting Malian refugees, which included Mangaize camp.²⁵ However, project staff indicated the 2015 study results were not used to inform design of UNHCR's multisector cash project.

The 2015 study showed an active and well integrated market economy in the Tondikiwindi area organised around agro pastoral inputs and products, with the Mangaize market highlighted as an important trans-border livestock market drawing people from across the region (Algeria, Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso and Nigeria).

Assessment data suggests however that overall market development potential in the area is limited by risk factors such as impacts of chronic food and pastoral crises, remoteness of market sites, poverty and generalised insecurity related to the conflict in Mali. Access and functionality is restricted to the dry season due to poor road infrastructure. The 2012 rapid assessment highlighted the need for market and trader support in the event of a cash program for refugees, noting the risks of insufficient supply, price inflation and security.

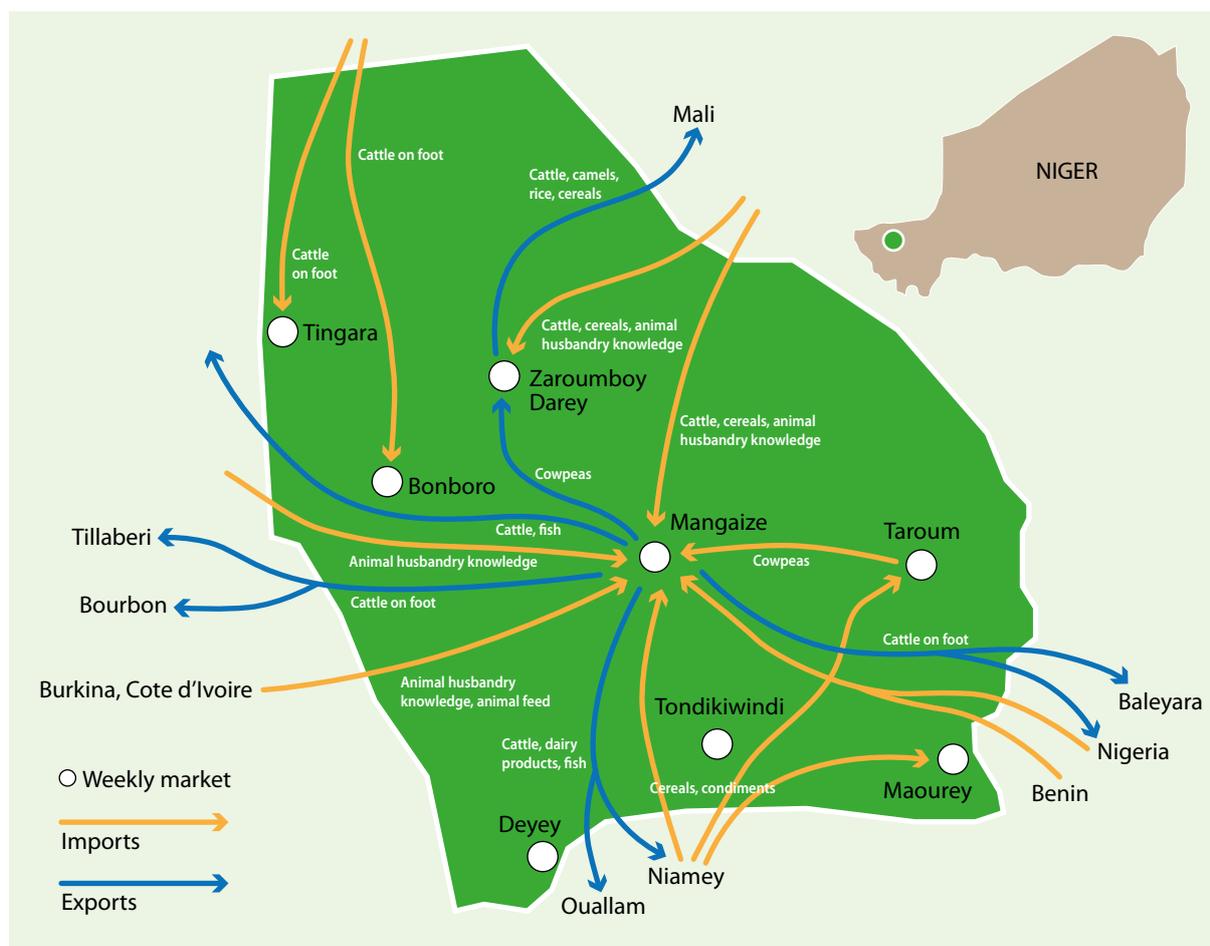
²² UNHCR 2015. Mission Report : Rapport de la mission multisectorielle sur le camp des réfugiés maliens de Mangaize. April 7–8 2015

²³ Sahel Recherches SARL (2015), 'Analyse des potentialités des marchés dans les communes d'Inates, de Tondikiwindi, de Banibangou et d'Abala – Tillaberi Nord', Report, HACP, ECHO, Oxfam and K. 43p

²⁴ Salifou, A., Ousseini H. et al "Profilage socioéconomique des bénéficiaires et analyse des marchés", Report, UNHCR and CARE, April 2016.

²⁵ WFP and UNHCR (2012), 'Etude des marchés associés aux camps de réfugiés d'Ayorou, Mangaizé, Abala et Agando', Mission report, Dec 2012, 19p.

Figure 2: Tondikiwindi municipality market flows.²⁶



The 2016 socioeconomic study was done specifically to redesign the livelihood grant component of the cash program, even though by then the grant had already been running for some time. It was not a Multisector Market Assessment (MSMA), which could have informed the transition towards a MPG. Instead, it provided a basic market analysis and socioeconomic profile of refugee and host populations, identifying the key economic activities practiced in the local area (small trade, livestock, handicrafts ...), preferences of men and women, and activities with the highest potential for development (agriculture, food trade, livestock ...). Risks and constraints were flagged for each type of activity. The study did not issue a detailed set of recommendations on how to address risks, nor did it identify complementary types of support – in particular, capacity-building and training needs – that would be required for successful, longer-term livelihood development.

A Multisector Market Assessment (MSMA) could have determined what goods and services could be purchased in sufficient and reliable quantity and quality to meet needs across a range of sectors (not only livelihoods), and helped to inform the calculation of the value of the MPG.

This might have included a Marketplace or Market Systems Analysis to map total demand, estimate the willingness or ability of traders and service providers to meet that demand, and **identify complementary forms of market support**. These complementary interventions might then be incorporated into the design. The results of the MSMA might also have informed the design of an appropriate market monitoring system, where prices, availability and quality of representative items from critical markets are regularly assessed. Seasonal, project-related and other impacts on markets may then be noted and appropriately mitigated.

²⁶ Sahel Recherches SARL (2015), 'Analyse des potentialités des marchés dans les communes d'Inates, de Tondikiwindi, de Banibangou et d'Abala – Tillabéri Nord', Report, HACP, ECHO, Oxfam and K., page 32

Complementary to the MSMA, a **Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB)** defines what a household requires to meet recurrent needs and the average cost of those needs over time. Defining an MEB serves three functions: it reflects need as perceived by the target population, including those that fall outside of traditional sectors; it determines what should be in the basket and therefore what markets to include in an MSMA; and it influences and informs the design of the MPG transfer value. The MPG will contribute to meeting the MEB, but can also include other one-off/recovery needs.

In the case of Mangaize, neither an MSMA nor an MEB were done, limiting the potential of the design process to properly address the full range of multisector needs.

SOCIAL SAFETY NETS IN NIGER – CELLULE FILETS SOCIAUX (CFS)

In 2011, the Niger CFS was launched - funded by the World Bank and housed in the Prime Minister's office. It aims to target 140,000 poor and food insecure households who receive transfer of 10,000 FCFA (circa 20 USD) every month for 2 years.

Social Safety net programs offer opportunities for greater synergies between humanitarian and development actors and represent potential exit strategies for longstanding humanitarian caseloads.

3.3 MPG TRANSFER DESIGN AND VALUE

The MPG transfer value can be based on the MEB, or alternatively on the local or national minimum wage rate or social safety net transfer value.

In the case of Mangaize the calculations were based on existing budgets and matched to the level of support given to 'poor' and 'food insecure' Nigerien households through the national *Cellule Filets Sociaux* program. From the onset in the decision-making, the government standpoint together with UNHCR budgetary constraints was considered. It was important that the money would not go far beyond Niger's minimum wage of 30,047 CFA²⁷ per month, approximately 60 USD.²⁸ **If each type of sectoral assistance were converted to a cash equivalent, this would add up to at least 55,000 CFA per household per month.**²⁹

In general, indexing the livelihood grant to Niger's social safety net system can be considered a good practice in the national and regional context³⁰, given the overlap between humanitarian caseloads and chronically vulnerable populations and the need for exit strategies.

Meanwhile, it is also important to consider the tradeoff between political acceptability/alignment and humanitarian objectives that aim to cover the need gap, often greater than that covered by government. **Indexing the value to market fluctuations in a context of inflationary market prices might also be important to enable beneficiaries to cover the full range of intended needs. It would be a useful exercise to understand how much the fulfilment of basic needs actually cost, and how different this is to Niger's minimum wage and the Filets Sociaux calculation of needs for food insecure households.** This could be a point of advocacy at a national level.

3.4 TARGETING STRATEGY

The NFIplus grant was a blanket distribution to all enrolled refugees. The Livelihood grant was self-targeted to those willing to sign the contract. UNHCR assumed that refugees would be reluctant to sign a contract for cessation of assistance. However, after several rounds of sensitisation more than 90 percent of households signed - the remainder being absent or new arrivals. UNHCR did not expect that almost all households in the camp would sign the contract, thus the project was only rolled out in Mangaize camp. The idea of a contract has been referred to as a paradox as refugees explained they would secure any type of support that was offered to them. The contract component makes this a conditional grant.

²⁷ www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/2013/479367.pdf, p.16

²⁸ 1 USD is about 600 CFA

²⁹ With average household size of 5: food (35,000), NFI (10,000) & AGR (10,000) = 55,000 per month. This does not include health, education, wash and protection. Nor is it based on calculation of the MEB. It does not consider in kind support.

³⁰ This depends on how what the social safety net is based on and how accurately this amount it able to cover the needs of affected populations. In the case of Niger it was out of the scope of this study to investigate the justification of the CFS as well as the minimum wage. These would be interesting follow up points.

To support livelihoods in the other camps, UNHCR and WFP are currently jointly developing comprehensive targeting criteria for all refugees that assess households' socioeconomic capacity to satisfy basic needs. These criteria are developed in a participatory manner with the refugees and will allow UNHCR and WFP to identify refugees well placed to eventually graduate out of assistance. The livelihoods grant would be given to promote an exit from assistance after an agreed period. For those who do not yet qualify for graduation, the same criteria can be used to target cash assistance for other needs addressed by UNHCR and to support their self-sufficiency. **It is important that targeting criteria include households' access to education, health and other basic needs.** This would then need to be reflected into a calculation of the MEB or cash equivalent support.

Finally, an effective targeting strategy relies on more than just criteria. Protection colleagues must be consulted to get feedback on contextual vulnerabilities, and ensure the process is inclusive of marginalised groups and people with specific needs. For example, people with disabilities may not be able to travel to market to spend their grant, or women in a context of gender-based violence may not be safe exiting the camp. **People with specific needs or protection risks should be identified and assessed, and referred to other forms of assistance if the MPG is not relevant for them.**

3.5 AGENCY CAPACITY FOR DELIVERING CASH

Are UNHCR and its partners ready to deliver cash – in terms of necessary experience, human resources including leadership, technical and support staff, systems such as financial tracking, beneficiary information management, and monitoring? Formal assessment of in-house capacities related to cash programming – and any needs around capacity building or recruitment of specialist expertise – necessary for a successful program should be carried out as part of the response analysis.

Existing UNHCR program staff shepherded the transition to cash, with some senior staff members experienced with cash but the majority of field-level staff lacking skills and experience in this area.

CaLP had recently developed an Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool³¹ (OCAT). This is a tool that can be used for self-assessment and support agencies and governments to understand their capacity to develop and or scale up CTP's.

3.6 SOPS AND DELIVERING THE MPG

There is at least one country-level assessment of Niger's financial sector and related opportunities to support cash and voucher transfers conducted by WFP³², but it may not have been made available externally. No formal assessment of cash delivery options, whether voucher, cash-in-hand, mobile money or other, was done by UNHCR Niger as part of determining operational feasibility of cash in Mangaize. Nor were lessons apparently sought from other cash programs in Niger that had used mobile money. Cash was delivered through ASUSU, a local financial service provider selected through an official and independent tender process.

Given the security risks and the ubiquity of mobile phones among the refugee population, mobile money may have been a more appropriate choice. Refugees had a strong preference for cash³³, however it is not clear if they had any experience with or are familiar with mobile phone banking options. It would be useful for UNHCR to explore in country of experience with mobile money by CWG.

Delivery of the cash grant through a Common Delivery Mechanism (CDM) for interagency programmes such as the Lebanese OneCard was not relevant in the case of this pilot. In future projects however, **consideration of interagency platforms for multipurpose and multiagency cash delivery will be important from a number of perspectives, including: cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness, timeliness, cost to and ease of use by beneficiaries, scale, as well as accountability, traceability and reporting requirements** (cf. Annex 4 MPG Toolkit).

³¹ www.cashlearning.org/strengthening-institutional-capacity/ctp-organisational-capacity-assessment-tool-ocat

³² WFP (2014), 'Niger Macro-Financial Assessment', internal document, World Food Programme.

³³ Based on UNHCR's consultations.

A general standard operating procedure or SOP was developed for the camp as well as a specific one for NFI implementation.³⁴ In theory all the distributions happen on the same day, including the cash voucher for food. Beneficiaries complained the distribution took too long; they were in line for most of the day.³⁵ The delivery of the NFI cash happens in one of the months when the livelihood contract grant cash is not given. Spreading out the delivery is a good practice for security reasons and perhaps to support refugees to pace their spending. On the other hand it gives them less opportunity to make bigger livelihood and other recovery investments. It is not clear if this choice was made in consultation with refugees.

In interviews with refugees, host community members and market actors in Mangaize, security emerged as a key issue. ASUSU travels with private security. UNHCR teams also travel with government escorts.³⁶ Nonetheless no security incidents related to Cash or Voucher distribution was reported. There was no mention about risk of fraud in the use of vouchers. The recent external audit³⁷ found no concerns with the different cash interventions.

KEY MESSAGES

1. An overarching objective for a MPG in a general humanitarian response could be to support refugees/affected populations to become self-sufficient as soon as possible.
2. It is good practice to assess the agency capacity for delivering cash and plan for reinforcing those capacities where needed as part of project design. CaLP has recently developed an Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT).
3. Coordination with national social safety net programs is a proven good practice in designing an MPG.
4. Defining a Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) is useful for determining the critical markets for analysis and for calculating the MPG transfer value; or alternatively grant values may be aligned with minimum wage rates or government social safety net transfer amounts.
5. Actors from across a range of sectors may be brought together in multiagency Multisector Market Assessment in order to inform the design of the grant and related market monitoring system, and enable interventions to be adjusted to changing market environment, including prediction of the seasonal supply of essential goods and services (cf. Annex 1 in MPG Toolkit).
6. Identifying which needs can be met through the local market and which require direct assistance and complementary support is important. Then grouping those needs able to be met through local purchases into a single household level transfer.
7. Understand the options available locally for delivering money safely and reliably before deciding on a modality. In this case specifically investigating the appropriateness of mobile money and e-transfers in the local context (cf. Annex 4 MPG Toolkit, Common Delivery Mechanisms, to explore operational alternatives step by step).
8. Targeting criteria should consider households' socio-economic situation holistically, including access to education, health and other basic needs.
9. As part of an effective targeting strategy, people with specific needs or protection risks should be identified and assessed, and referred to other forms of assistance if the MPG is not relevant for them.

³⁴ Sani M. L., Sani D. A. et al (2015)

³⁵ This was particularly for the food voucher distributions.

³⁶ On the day the team visited the market there was a case of armed robbery reported close to the market that day (UNHCR team members).

³⁷ From interview with UNHCR Country Representative

4 PROGRAM QUALITY AND IMPACT

This section discusses the basic program quality aspects including risk analysis, data protection and accountability. It also looks at the impact described by beneficiaries. Young boys and girls took the photographs in this section.³⁸ They illustrate how the combination of cash interventions gave their families choice consistent with their specific capabilities, such as their small businesses, their homes and their livestock. The photographs visually support the stories of impact shared by the adults.

4.1 PROGRAM QUALITY

Protection-related risks and benefits

Protection risks had been identified, including the potential for an increase in household-level conflict, but no clear linkage to program design and choice of modality and delivery mechanism was made to mitigate these risks. Other important risks including those related to data protection and beneficiary privacy were not mentioned. Meanwhile, there were no reports of increased tensions or internal household conflict as a result of the cash transfers.

Data Protection

There is a concern around data protection measures. Only ASUSU mentioned a data protection strategy - however with so many actors and so much data this is a real risk and concern. With the rollout of WFP's e-voucher, to be piloted in Mangaize in July 2016, this will include the collection of separate biometric data. UNHCR already collects biometric data. There needs to be coordination and agreement at ground level to complement ongoing discussions at HQ level on data sharing, perhaps in the SOP around data management.

Accountability, communication and beneficiary feedback

Accountability and feedback mechanisms are in place through the refugee committee and the different groups represented, such as women and youth representatives. This is an important principle within any program design and a core principle of UNHCR's community-based protection. It is unclear how these were actually used by refugees and host communities or whether systems changed when the program design was adjusted. There needs to be coordination between different agencies and/or sectors and beneficiaries to ensure feedback and complaints mechanisms work effectively. This could be incorporated into the SOP.

Refugees are being sensitised – and in some cases the leaders are consulted in the design of the project. This was a big impetus to changing the modality of the NFI distributions to grants. However, beneficiaries are not aware of the selection criteria or the justification of the grant calculations. Most of the information seems to be shared through community leaders in big public meetings. According to the refugees, the process is to have refugee status in order to have access to NFI cash, vouchers.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes

There have been several points of evaluation for both the NFIplus and livelihood grants. However, none of them have looked at the different programs together, which the team saw as separate. Evaluation findings are not structured and exist in the form of PowerPoint presentations. They are useful and succinct, however it is unclear what happens with these results and whether the lessons identified are being put into practice. It is unclear if the recommendations that were made and the feedback from the refugees were implemented, or coordinated with WFP voucher program. It would be good practice to **conduct a learning exercise where all the interim evaluations that have been done are reviewed, and any relevant findings addressed.**

WFP conducts regular market monitoring on the basis of which it adjusts prices for commodities. However, it does not adjust the value of the voucher to ensure that households still get their minimum food needs as per calculation of the food basket. WFP does not monitor other market data. There is no further evidence of market monitoring by UNCHR in relation to the NFIplus and livelihood grants.

³⁸ These pictures taken by a group of boys and girls give a personal view of the impact of the cash-based support given in the camp. Each group was given a camera and invited to take pictures of people, places or things that illustrate the impact of the cash grants their families had received. See Annex VI for an overview of all pictures.

From field interviews with beneficiaries and with market actors it is clear that the cash influx is having a substantial impact on Mangaize market. This is further explained below in the market impact section.

In light of general market analysis and need assessment data, it would have been good practice for the design team to match the needs expressed by beneficiaries with the capacity of the local market to reliably provide goods and services that meet those needs, while minimising negative impacts. In the case of an interagency MPG this exercise should include a range of actors looking at their sector, and allows for seasonal fluctuations in supply and price to be addressed through program design, for example, through regular adjustments in the value of the grant to match changes in market prices across a range of basic needs, or seasonal support extended to traders to address inventory issues.

Exit strategies

The situation of exit strategies in the case of refugees and the UNHCR mandate is distinctive, as UNHCR by humanitarian law provides support and protection to refugees. However, from discussions with senior management the overarching approach in Niger is to support refugees to become independent even if they are unable to go back to their countries. The idea of the contract approach for the livelihood grant was to encourage households to develop sustainable income sources. This in itself can be considered an exit strategy. Complementing this, UNHCR is persistently negotiating with Nigerien authorities at National, Regional and Local levels to secure land for refugees where they will be able to reside permanently. The legal aspects of employment and ability to undertake economic activities, the right for free movement are priority areas of advocacy for UNHCR with the Nigerien government. This illustrates the complexity of refugee support and the need for ongoing government coordination, collaboration and support. UNHCR encourages the government to be the provider of social services for health and education in the camps and refugee areas. Lastly, UNHCR supports voluntary returns and resettlement of refugees.

The main exit strategy concern is how to support refugees with training and skills that they need in the 'new' context. This seems to be a gap in the overall program. It has been thought about, but so far not implemented. UNHCR Niger is exploring how to best include refugees in ongoing livelihoods programmes and how to coordinate and capitalise on synergies with development organisations to avoid duplication of efforts.

Though this is UNHCR specific, exit strategies for any cash-based support in the context of West Africa are critical. The relationship with, and capacity building of, government is an essential component of an MPG. UNHCR is strong in its collaborative development of these.

Gender

From experience, in general gender considerations are weak in humanitarian programs. From the interviews with beneficiaries - where in many households the men agreed that the women could receive the grant, there seems to be no direct indication of gender-related protection issues. However, the context for women in Mali in general is one where early marriages are prevalent. There is some evidence that this may be on the increase in the case of the Mali crisis, where early marriages are a coping strategy.

As a global WFP standard women receive the food voucher and the cash grants. From the initial field interviews there seem to be no issues at household level with this. All women and girls of reproductive age received sanitary kits, which is standard in UNHCR operations.

There is no clear evidence that UNHCR has conducted a gender analysis and incorporated this into the design of the cash responses, though men and women were consulted separately in evaluations and no clear gender concerns were highlighted. However, this is not sufficient to understand the gender issues and imbalances.

4.2 IMPACT

The three different cash programs in Mangaize are having a positive impact on refugees' ability to make their own choices and support themselves.

It is clear that the combination of cash-based initiatives – food vouchers, NFIplus and the livelihood grant – has had a very positive impact on people's lives. Each grant supplemented a specific household need. The combination of different grants supported families to prioritise their needs and enhanced their respective activities. UNHCR staff also observed that compared to other camps, in Mangaize people are busy with their lives and less people are hanging around.³⁹ This was attributed to the enabling environment that is created through the cash-based support.



Omar's animals were bought with a livelihood grant



Adamou and his sister with shelter support from UNHCR

³⁹ Though according to the interviews with women, it seems that men have less to do than women.

Beneficiaries who *did not* sign the Livelihood contract grant explained that the combination of cash interventions is significantly better than the in-kind distribution. It allows them to cover food needs for their families and their small livestock, and enabled them to expand their productive capacities. They regret not being part of the livelihood contract grants. The combination of different interventions provided them with choice to diversify their diet.



Zeinuba's father opened a small shop with money from the livelihood grant, Zeinuba takes care of it when he is not around.



Lailata and her younger sister make clothes

The beneficiaries who *signed* the livelihood contract said that the cash gives them the ability to diversify their productive assets. They are able to buy more equipment, fodder and veterinary products for their livestock. They explained that the combination of cash interventions for their family has given them the opportunity to engage in activities like livestock breeding, petty trade and fattening (l'embouche) of goats and sheep, tanning leather, making leather goods, selling prepared food and peanuts.

Market impact

The market impact of the cash influx into the economy of Mangaize is significant. There has been an expansion of sales and trade on all markets of the area. This had developed rapidly since the introduction of the cash responses. The assistance received by refugees increased the availability of quality products and competitive prices on local markets. It has brought more cash into the market as opposed to goods for trade.

Markets adjusted to the change in cash assistance. Refugees are able to find everything they need with their vouchers. However, there are only a few traders benefiting from the cash voucher. Despite the lack of tarpaulins, there is an increased diversity of good quality products and trade has become fruitful.

4.3 CONCERNS AND FEEDBACK

The main feedback from the interviews concerning the NFplus grant is that shelter materials such as tarpaulins are not readily available on the market. As beneficiaries are not allowed to build semi-permanent structures, they regularly have to replace their tarpaulins. That said, according to UNHCR in country, the logistical cost of re-introducing would have reduced the efficiency and timeliness of the grant. There are still discussions that need to take place to explore how parts of the education cost could be effectively translated into cash. The sector team is concerned that if this is unconditional it is unlikely that the money will be used for educational needs. UNHCR is in the process of negotiating with government and local leadership to allocate land for semi-permanent use by refugees from Mali.

- The solution to this may be more about a market intervention as well as negotiating areas of land for the refugees to make more permanent homes.

People complained that the distribution process takes too long and is inefficient. This is particularly the case for the vouchers as these are given for each person. Beneficiaries suggested that there be a set up where each different household size collects from a designated distribution officer.

In terms of the livelihood grant, it seems that some received training and some did not. It is not clear if this is training from CARE or previous training from other NGOs supporting restoration of livelihoods in the camp. Interviews conducted by UNHCR revealed that about 50 percent of households receiving the livelihood contract grant are proceeding according to plan and will be able to support themselves, about 35 percent of households said they were not sure they could manage after the end of the grant and about 15 percent said they would not be able to cope when the grant ended.

- There is a need to revisit the training and skills needs for the population – based on CARE's assessment in 2016 of what households are engaged in paired with UNHCR's evaluation of households' ability to manage after the grant ends – and to consider extending training beyond the contract period of the grant. Partnering with local agencies to provide beneficiaries with financial training and skills training might also be considered.

There is a clear surge in prices at the market during distributions of cash.

- There is a need to consider mitigation mechanisms for price surge due to rapid increase in purchasing power, including establishing and using regular price monitoring systems, alerting and preparing market actors to meet increased demand through the provision of information, supporting capacity of market actors to meet increased demand through a variety of mechanisms, and spreading out payments to dilute the impact of the cash influx.

Most of the groups, regardless of whether they had signed the livelihood contract, feel insecure with their cash due to the presence of banditry in the area. It seems that since the cash has been distributed there may be an increase in insecurity and in the feeling of insecurity. **Beneficiaries feel the need to spend their money almost immediately and cannot wait for prices to change.** It also makes saving for bigger expenses harder to do.

There is a need to monitor and address actual and perceived insecurity experienced by refugees as a result of the cash distributions, reducing exposure through the judicious choice of delivery mechanism and design of transfer processes.

4.4 RELATIONSHIP WITH HOST COMMUNITIES

Refugees explained that they have no problem making exchanges with the host community. The Peul/Fulani refugees herd animals for both populations. From interviews with host community since the arrival of the refugees to Mangaize their basic social services have improved; primary school building has been improved, a high school was established, the health centre was rehabilitated⁴⁰ and they have more access to medical care, access to drinking water and commerce.

The host community explained that there were also challenges. Their fields are damaged by refugees' livestock, as there are insufficient grazing areas. They complained that the refugees sabotage the farms during the rainy season; they dig holes and build enclosures without notice.

Since the arrival of refugees, the local community no longer receives humanitarian assistance. They recommended that agencies take into account the vulnerability of local populations in their humanitarian interventions. There seems to be an understated issue of tension over resources and assistance. Though there are clear positive impacts on the market side, the big influx of food is benefiting only a few traders who are possibly from outside Mangaize.⁴¹

Traditional informal structures for exchange between the leaders of both communities exist. There is also a mixed committee of refugees and host community that manages the parts that links the two populations, announcing ceremonies, dealing with conflict between pastoralists and agriculturalists.

KEY MESSAGES

1. An organisation with limited experience has started with multisector CTP, showing others it is possible and does not require specific extensive experience in cash.
2. Seek to understand the protection-related risks and benefits and document how the choice of modality and delivery mechanism reflects identified protection risks and benefits.
3. Clarify data protection information, especially in the case where beneficiary lists are being shared between partners and biometric data is being collected by both WFP and UNHCR.
4. There needs to be coordination between different agencies and/or sectors and beneficiaries to ensure feedback and complaints mechanisms work effectively.
5. Gender analysis is critical and needs to be included in MPG design.
6. An MPG which includes a livelihood component needs to take into consideration the needs and capacities of potential beneficiaries.
7. Future relationships with host communities, particularly in the context of increased cash support, are important considerations given the different kinds settlement contexts in which refugees are supported in Niger.

⁴⁰ Though during the market visit the local hospital did not seem to be functioning.

⁴¹ It needs to be noted that recently WFP has been trying to break up the monopoly of traders that controlled the prices.

5 PREPAREDNESS AND COORDINATION

5.1 PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

Operational feasibility of cash, people's needs and relationships with markets, and the acceptability of cash programming to beneficiaries, governments and donors are all part of good preparedness planning. However, the chronic nature of crisis in the West Africa sub-region has led to regional and country responses focused on crisis rather than preparation. It seems that given the constancy of crisis there is clear potential for forward planning. Meanwhile, the social protection agenda of development actors in the region often includes cash and furthers preparedness objectives by protecting the very poor – who by some accounts are also those who are chronically vulnerable in the annual lean season and thus part of the humanitarian caseload.⁴²

In Niger, the national food crisis and disaster prevention and management mechanism⁴³ is the main framework for preparedness and has helped to implement cash transfers on a large scale. However, specific preparedness on multisector and multipurpose cash requires **strategic and technical coordination** of the full range of humanitarian actors – not only food and nutrition – for agreement on common tools and methods. This could include inventories of available services and providers of technologies (such as mobile money), baseline assessments (needs and gap analysis; market analysis) and reviews of cash delivery mechanisms (financial service providers or FSP) necessary to enable cross-agency responses. It is also likely to include capacity building for the broader community of practice on multisector, multipurpose cash. **This requires functional, strategically focused country-level Cash Working Groups co-led by the government, and should feature linkages to national social protection systems.**

At local level, MPG preparedness involves multisector technical and operational coordination across actors on i) *common* establishment of baselines on local needs and gaps, market systems and services, including calculation of minimum expenditure baskets; ii) *common* security, gender and protection risk analyses and identification of potential mitigation measures; iii) review of implementing arrangements, including organisational capacity of implementing, operational and private sector partners; and iv) *common* determination of a delivery mechanism and elaboration of stand-by arrangements with one or more appropriate financial service providers.

For UNHCR Niger, the decision to move to cash transfers from in kind in Mangaize was made mid-project. **However, forecasts around future refugee flow into Niger and the future role of multisector cash could inform preparedness activities so as to be better positioned for rapid rollout and scale up.** ASUSU, WFP and UNHCR mentioned the possibility of using mobile money. Many refugees have phones and it may be a very simple solution to use this as a delivery mechanism. This would mean starting negotiations and testing with mobile phone companies who are developing mobile money and banking services, of which there are at least three.⁴⁴ This all supports potential learning for and ongoing preparedness for continued responses in Diffa.

5.2 COORDINATION

There are several regional working groups in Dakar, including a regional Cash Working Group (CWG). Historically cash coordination has been handled through the existing food security clusters. In recent years, national CWGs have begun to separate from food security clusters in order to recognise and more effectively coordinate multisector cash. Until recently cash coordination in West Africa has been limited to a handful of countries such as Niger and Ivory Coast. Now, a number of national groups such as Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Chad have received support from the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) for the organisation of national events, capacity building and the development of coordination and experience-sharing tools.

By some accounts cash groups in the region have held a mainly technical knowledge-sharing role, with little of the operational coordination on tools and methods that is required for multisector, multipurpose cash and cash at scale, nor the strategic focus on early overview of needs and gaps across different sectors.⁴⁵ Parallel initiatives linked to informal ECHO-supported NGO and WFP consortia have absorbed the most active actors in cash

⁴² See Bernard, J. 2015. 'Mali: scoping study of social protection initiatives in the most fragile and conflict affected states'. ECHO.

⁴³ Dispositif National pour la Prévention et la Gestion des Catastrophes et des Crises Alimentaires, or DNPGCCA

⁴⁴ Orange, Airtel and Moov

⁴⁵ Personal communications, WFP Dakar and ECHO Dakar.

transfers within countries, sometimes undermining the role of cash groups. Meanwhile, WFP as a major cash actor has the capacities and technical platforms needed for bringing together partners for multi-actor programming.

The Niger CWG, created in 2008, features strong technical coordination with a number of Niger actors⁴⁶ and successful cash advocacy with government; but has failed to deliver operational coordination for common delivery mechanisms. Since 2014, the national CWG has been inactive.⁴⁷ Recent involvement of OCHA and stronger support from CaLP has allowed the CWG to reconsider its format and mandate. The CWG is currently being reactivated with a multisectoral and strategic approach.

For the Mangaize project it seems that no cash working groups and/or clusters were involved or consulted in determining the design of the interventions. Partners and stakeholders spoken to, including UNHCR staff in Niger are not aware of CaLP nor of the current regional resource for UNHCR.

KEY MESSAGES

1. To enhance preparedness for multisector cash scale-up in Niger and the region, start with the establishment of functional, strategically focused country-level Cash Working Groups co-led by government and able to coordinate contextual needs and market baselines, assessment of available delivery mechanisms and reinforcement of in-house capacities around cash transfers
2. To enhance operational coordination with other cash actors, start with multisector assessment and definition of MEB – where appropriate – at preparedness stage, and proactive multisector engagement on target populations, transfer values and delivery mechanisms, in order to ensure consistency and complementarity and to minimise confusion and burden on beneficiaries
3. In Niger it is timely that CaLP re-activate the CWG and encourage UNHCR and WFP to share their experiences in Multisectoral cash and the potential for Multipurpose cash in refugee settings. This is also relevant at the at Diffa and Mangaize levels.
4. In Niger, there is an opportunity for UNHCR and WFP collect experience of mobile money and banking and pilot its use in Mangaize.

⁴⁶ DNPGCCA, the Food Crisis Think Tank, the National Social Safety Net Think Tank and the recently formed Humanitarian Crisis Think Tank. Other CaLP members are also already active in Niger.

⁴⁷ This was led by CaLP between 2008 and 2012 (national focal point in country before CaLP switched to a regional office strategy)

6 CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS AND LESSONS

This section draws out learning from the Mangaize experience and partners, and explores how it might be applied more broadly in the Niger refugee context.

6.1 TAKING STOCK

In summary, without having experience UNHCR Niger and partners did cover many of the basic steps and good practices as outlined in the MPG Toolkit. The combination of cash programs is making a lasting difference for refugees and is paving the way for them to become self-sufficient.

6.2 MAKING AN MPG WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF REFUGEE CAMPS IN NIGER

In 2016, UNHCR in Niger conducted an internal exercise to explore how a cash modality could be used across different sectors of intervention and types of situations in which the agency supports refugees in Niger. The agency sees the cost effectiveness and means to further empower refugees to become self-sufficient as values of a multipurpose grant. A number of key issues flagged for further development during an in-country brainstorming, included the need for **sectoral cash feasibility studies, selection and training of actors, targeting, identification of suppliers and FSPs, and development of SOPs**. Current implementing partners CARE and ASUSU are open to the idea, and WFP is another obvious immediate partner. Key themes that need to be unpacked include targeting criteria, beneficiary lists, monitoring, and the issue of in-kind and cash combinations and relationship to the national minimum wage.

A starting point in the development of an MPG across sectors and agencies is to **define an overarching objective** from which the response plan is developed, and unify the SOPs and distribution plan and payments. In the case of Mangaize there is no explicit unifying objective because the cash-based interventions (CBI) were developed separately and each CBI has its own objective. From conversations with senior staff an overarching objective is apparent which is “to support refugees to become self-sufficient as soon as possible”. In general, this could be seen as a unifying objective for humanitarian agencies.

For UNHCR to move to a more coherent MPG strategy at camp level, it would be useful to develop an **MPG response plan**. SOP documents can be developed for an MPG rather than each sectoral response. The SOP can become work planning/program monitoring tool for UNHCR and partners. This would be a key first step to support UNHCR’s in-country strategy to expand CBI to other Mali camps and potentially to Diffa region.

WFP’s response to moving to interagency MPG is positive. The agency has plans to move to an electronic methodology and will be piloting an **e-voucher technology** in Mangaize in July 2016. The agency and CaLP are both interested in piloting an MPG together. Coordination between organisations would be required, as would **streamlining implementation arrangements** including legal issues and contracts with FSPs, such that one agency takes the lead on signing the contract for the MPG. **Combining tools** across partners is another area of work, for example to complement WFP’s Omega tool⁴⁸. Design and development of the MPG tool needs to be done with all partners. Multisector market monitoring and adjustments are crucial.

Ideally the **Government of Niger would serve as co-lead of a new country level CWG as planned in latest discussions about the new CWG in country**⁴⁹ or coordinating body under the guise of the national social safety net program. The new CWG would facilitate proper multisector coordination on tools, targeting and other implementation-related issues needed for successful scale up of multisector cash. The MPG response should be incorporated into the Niger Government’s *Plan de Soutien*, which determines aid needed and transfer modalities for each year in Niger.

⁴⁸ The WFP Omega Value tool assesses the relative nutrient cost effectiveness of various response choices by comparing nutrition and cost implications of different bundles of food baskets to achieve nutrition and dietary objectives. The Omega Value approach offers a way to understand the nutritional trade-offs across cash, vouchers, LRP Local Regional Procurement and transoceanic food aid. WFP 2014.

⁴⁹ CaLP coordination day organised in 26th of May, 2016 in Niamey. For the report please [click here](#)

MPG partners will need to develop and use **common targeting criteria** that measure vulnerability beyond food insecurity. Currently WFP and HCR are testing and developing joint targeting criteria for refugees in Niger, a first step in a collaboration that could eventually lead to the implementation of an interagency MPG response.

The response to the **crisis in Diffa** is an opportunity to explore the feasibility of piloting an MPG approach for refugee responses, notwithstanding the complexity of Diffa coordination and the out-of-camp nature of the response. This would be an MPG internally for UNHCR with additional support from WFP and other partners who are able to meet different needs that UNHCR does not cover. The CaLP could support by setting up a CWG in Diffa, chaired by UNHCR or WFP to build on their joint experience in Mangaize.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The UNHCR experience with multisector cash in Mangaize camp is an important first step in introducing the MPG approach in the region. It is not a full MPG as it is not in the form of one grant and comes with specific conditions. However it is a good example of how an agency less experienced in cash transfer programming is creative enough to effectively implement cash across its sectors. From this experience, lessons can be identified and used for broader application by the community of practice in Niger and West Africa.

Design choices and implementation arrangements in the Mangaize case illustrate some of the key challenges to operationalising multisector and multipurpose cash in the region, including **gaps in strategic leadership and coordination, situation analysis, market analysis, and risk mitigation**.

Good practices demonstrated by the project and appropriate to the context include **alignment with national social protection systems** as an exit strategy for humanitarian caseloads.

Opportunities include leveraging increasingly integrated partnerships, such as between UNHCR and WFP, and investing in new technologies such as **mobile money**. This can be used to safely scale up multipurpose cash in a context of limited banking infrastructure. Other opportunities include using the **experience of cash actors** such as the WFP who can share lessons and tools such as their beneficiary biometric data platforms. Introducing and scaling up MPGs at regional level will require leveraging this learning and experience to influence key donors and decision makers, and using it to inform design of locally appropriate MPG programs.

Essential learning points that the Niger Community of Practice or CoP can take forward include:

- The feasibility and appropriateness of multisector cash in the Niger refugee context and beyond;
- The possibility to leapfrog over other (untried) CTP modalities such as labour-intensive vouchers;
- The value of pilots to develop agency experience and prove effectiveness of the approach;
- The benefit of recruiting ad-hoc expertise to support design and setup if in-house experience is lacking;
- The importance of flexible and supportive senior leadership and donor relationships to encourage risk-taking and advocate vis-à-vis other potential donors; and
- The need to link to long-term opportunities with cash such as the national social safety net program.
- The essence of developing good relationships and coordination mechanisms with relevant National and Local government entities.
- The importance of actively sharing, learning and coordinating with National and local CaLP partners through a CWG and be able to leverage existing experience to further innovate multipurpose cash transfers.

Sectoral assistance can benefit from the MPG approach in a number of ways, including through synergies of time, cost and scale around key steps in the project cycle such as assessment, targeting and delivery of assistance; reduced burden on and greater choice for beneficiaries; and improved effectiveness of assistance overall.

7.2 INTRODUCING AND SCALING UP MPG AT REGIONAL LEVEL

For scale up of multisector and multipurpose cash, and in the context of developing interagency MPG approaches, commitment to participation in **effective coordination arrangements** at national, regional and headquarter level is a prerequisite, with focus on two areas: i) increasing capacity through experience sharing and training; and ii) strategic coordination on cross sector advocacy, needs and design. The CaLP, or States, are called to play an expanded and sustained role in coordination and preparedness.

The absence of **cash delivery platforms** such as banks and telecom is a major challenge in the region today, especially outside of capital areas. Mobile network coverage is poor, and the limited expansion of banking infrastructure combined with high insecurity means there is generalised lack of safe delivery mechanisms. Improved linkages with private sector actors are needed, and can and should be strategically fostered through coordination platforms.

Moving beyond the focus on sectoral food and nutrition-based response to crisis in the region is critical, and so is **broadening vulnerability criteria** beyond the socio-economic measures used by many donors and national SP systems. Achieving this will require a strong strategic focus from the community of practice.

There is agreement on the urgent need for national level **training and assessment platforms** to increase capacity on cash; also to be facilitated through improved coordination arrangements. Experienced cash actors such as WFP can play an expanded role on CTP capacity building. Market assessments should include a wider range of goods and services beyond food needs and be done collaboratively.

Indeed, donors in the region commonly request more and joint analysis for multipurpose cash.⁵⁰ This suggests both the need for improved analysis, combined with a greater role in **donor advocacy** by a regional CWG. The **learning** generated from improved analysis could be drawn on for design of multisector and multipurpose cash, and inform the incorporation of appropriate risk mitigation measures.⁵¹

Finally, country-level leadership on **harmonisation of tools** for joint feasibility assessments, market monitoring, targeting and beneficiary databases can be provided by the CaLP or other lead agency through best practice experiences and available toolkits.

⁵⁰ On needs assessment, market and other impacts of cash programming, on cost-effectiveness...

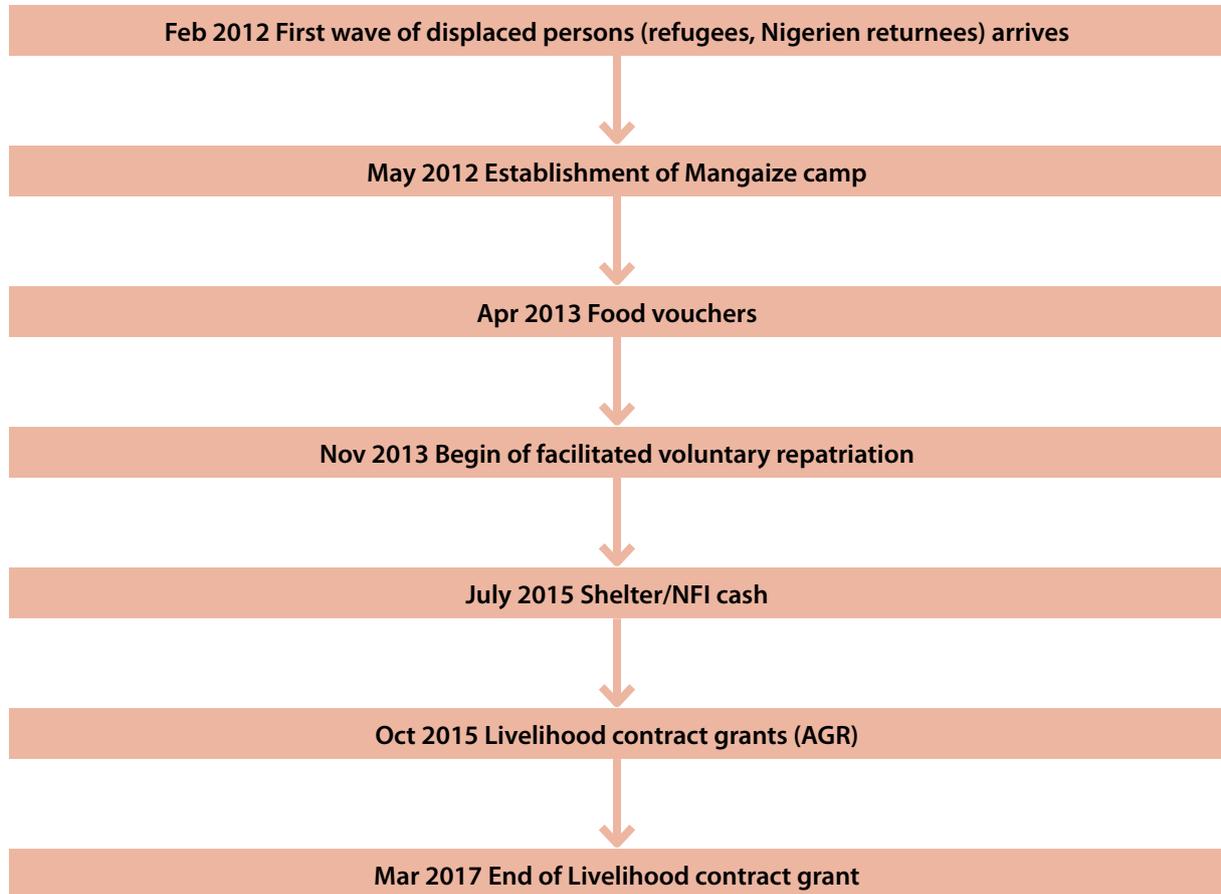
⁵¹ In particular, mitigation measures for negative market impacts, which currently appears as a gap.

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ANNEX 2: TIMELINE

Figure 3: Timeline of Cash-based Responses Mangaize Camp



ANNEX 3: OVERVIEW OF CASH TRANSFERS IN MANGAIZE

Table 1: Overview of CBI in Mangaize

Transfer	Amount	Frequency	Number of Beneficiaries	Duration and Conditions
Food Voucher	7,000 CFA per person	Every month	All 1,600 Households in the camp	Ongoing as an alternative to food in kind – since 2013
Objective	To empower refugees living in Mangaize camp to satisfy their food needs based on their own assessment.			
NFIplus	30,000 CFA per household	Every 3 months	All 1,600 Households in the camp	10,000 per month. Ongoing as an alternative to NFI & Shelter in kind – since July 2015
Objective	To provide an alternative to direct distribution of Non-food items to refugees in Mangaize camp. Target: entire camp population.			
Livelihood contract grant (AGR)	30,000 CFA per household	Every 3 months	1,538 Households of Mangaize	10,000 were calculated for each month for a total of 18 months. The livelihood grants will end in December.
Objective	To provide a supporting unconditional grant to empower refugees to become independent by the end of 2016. A Contract approach.			
Re-integration	10,000	Per month	5,000 Niger returnees	Implemented under Filets Sociaux, funded by UNHCR for 24 months
Objective	To facilitate reintegration of displaced Nigerien citizens.			
Voluntary return	35,000 CFA	Once	9,000 refugee volunteers	If returning to the camp, need to wait 3 months to be re-admitted into refugee status and receive support.
Objective	To facilitate transport and reintegration of Malian refugee in their home country.			

ANNEX 4:VOUCHER AND LIVELIHOOD CONTRACT EXAMPLES



ENGAGEMENT D'AUTONOMISATION ET SORTIE D'ASSISTANCE

849- H / 176

Photo01

Je soussigné(e) (Nom) _____ (Prénom) _____

déclare solennellement:

1. Que je suis citoyen de la république du Mali;
2. Que je suis né(e) le _____ à _____ dans la region de _____ ;
3. Que depuis mon arrivée, j'ai bénéficié de l'assistance multisectorielle de l'UNHCR et ses partenaires;
4. Que je souhaite adhérer au programme d'autonomisation à travers le cash en recevant 10,000 FCFA par mois pour effectuer des activités génératrices de revenus;
5. Au terme d'une distribution en cash jusqu'au 31 Décembre 2016, j'atteste par la présente déclaration que je comprends que ma famille et moi ne serons plus pris en compte par l'assistance de l'UNHCR et de ses partenaires;
6. Que je prends cet engagement librement, de bonne foi et en connaissance de cause.
7. Ma famille est composée des 5 individus ci-dessous, qui sont tous de nationalité Malienne.

Numero individuel	Nom complet	Naissance	Sexe	Age	Parente	Etat civil	Lieu Naissance	Nationalite
1 ✓ 849-			(F)		HR1			Mali
2 ✓ 849-			(F)		DAU			Mali
3 ✓ 849-			(M)		SON			Mali
4 ✓ 849-			(F)		DAU			Mali
5 ✓ 849-			(F)		DAU			Mali

J'atteste que le présent document m'a été lu à haute et intelligible voix. En conséquence, ma famille et moi en avons une bonne compréhension, en foi de quoi je l'ai signé de mon plein gré.

LE DECLARANT

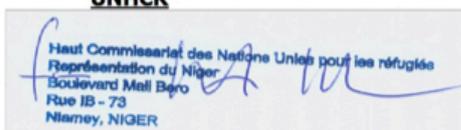
Name/Nom :

profession:

Date: 02 Oct 2015 12:21

Signature.....

UNHCR



Date: 02 Oct 2015 12:21

ANNEX 5: CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS AND KEY INFORMANTS

CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS ⁵³			
Name	Organisation	Position	Location
Abdoulahi Tambari Agali	UNHCR	Protection Associate	Ouallam
Alhassane Moussa	UNHCR	Livelihoods Associate	Niamey
Amadou Hima Zeinabou	UNHCR	Community Services Assistant	Ouallam
Dodo Abdoulaye	UNHCR	Registration Assistant	Ouallam
Hayatou Idrissa	UNHCR	Administrative Assistant	Ouallam
Mariama Idrissa	UNHCR	Translator, Interpreter	Niamey
Robert Heyn	UNHCR	Associate Targeting Officer	Niamey
Seydou Diaouga	UNHCR	Field Safety Associate	Ouallam
Yonoudjourn Médard Monodjomi	UNHCR	Expert WaSH Officer, Programme Monitoring & Evaluation	Niamey
Hamadou Adamou	APBE	Camp Manager	Mangaizé
Karl Rachid	APBE	Resp. Mob/Com	Mangaizé
Laila Mamane Ali	APBE	Assistante Nutrition	Mangaizé
Rabi Idrissa Zataou	APBE	Promoteur Mob/Com	Mangaizé
Aminata Issafeitane	Ass des femmes Réfugiées	Présidente	Mangaizé
Amina Galadima	CARE	Agent communautaire	Niamey
Billo Yayé	CNE	Chargé de Protection	Ouallam
Garba Tagaza Assoumana	CNE	Enrégistrement	Ouallam
Idi Daouda Abdourahamane	CNE	Administrateur Adjoint	Ouallam
Oumarou Albegney Maman	CNE	Assistant Enrégistrement	Ouallam
Haida Amali	Comite Réfugiés	Membre	Mangaizé
Issa Dan Magagia Maman Moctar	DIKO	Officier PE/PBS	Mangaizé
Mahamane Goya Mabsoussa	DIKO	SGBV	Mangaizé
Amadou Housseini	WFP	Assistant Cash	Ouallam

⁵² Case study participants contributed directly to the case study and were involved in interviews and analysis of findings. Names in bold were part of the core team.



KEY INFORMANTS			
Name	Organisation	Position	Location
Isabelle Pelly	CaLP	Technical Coordinator	Oxford
Nathalie Cissokho	CaLP	WAF Regional Focal Point	Dakar
Abdoul-Azize Adamou Nadere	UNHCR	Programme Associate	Niamey
Aboubacar Maman Gambo	UNHCR	Assistant Protection Officer	Niamey
Benoît Moreno	UNHCR	External Relations Officer	Niamey
Davies Kamau	UNHCR	Former Head of Field Office Ouallam	Niamey
Fatoma Souleymane Saley	UNHCR	Nutrition Associate	Niamey
Harouna Abdoulaye	UNHCR	Assistant Public Health Officer	Niamey
Karl Steinacker	UNHCR	Country Representative	Niamey
Maiga Nouhou	UNHCR	Assistant Programme Officer	Niamey
Pierre Camara	UNHCR	Senior Programme Officer	Niamey
Riikka Mikkola	UNHCR	Regional Cash-Based Intervention Officer	Dakar
Sani Dan Aoudé	Care	Head of Section, Monitoring & Evaluation	Niamey
Jérôme Bernard	ECHO	Regional AT (Food Security)	Dakar
Amayel Sow	WFP	Regional Programme Officer	Dakar
Denise Brown	WFP	Former regional director West Africa, Former Country Director Niger	Dakar
Margaret Rehm	WFP	Regional Emergency Officer	Dakar
Sidiki Traoré Boubacar	WFP	Programme Policy Officer Cash & Voucher, Head of Rural development unit	Niamey
Tahir Nour	WFP	Chief, Market Access Programs Policy and Programme Division	Dakar
Moussa Hassane Abdoulkarim	Asusu S. A.	Chef Service Monétique et Trsfert	Niamey



The Cash Learning Partnership

In the midst of the Mali refugee crisis in Niger, UNHCR implemented one of the first multisector cash transfer projects in Mangaize refugee camp in 2015, providing refugees with grants covering non-food items, hygiene, shelter and livelihood needs. The cash project came on the heels of a successful food voucher program in the same camp implemented jointly with WFP. The voucher program demonstrated the appropriateness and feasibility of cash transfers in a refugee setting. This led to the development of UNHCR's innovative multisector cash project in Mangaize. With little experience in cash, common sense and a strong country team, UNHCR developed a successful multisector cash project in combination with other support mechanisms to stimulate refugees capabilities to become self-sufficient.

Good practices demonstrated by the project and appropriate to the context include alignment with national social protection systems as an exit strategy for humanitarian caseloads. The key challenges to operationalising multisector and multipurpose cash in the region include gaps in strategic leadership and coordination, situation analysis, market analysis, and risk mitigation. Opportunities include leveraging increasingly integrated partnerships, and investing in new technologies such as mobile money.

UNHCR's experience in Mangaize holds important lessons for the agency's transition from multisector cash to multipurpose cash in refugee settings. It can facilitate a broader introduction of multipurpose cash by the cash community of practice across Niger and the West Africa region.

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