



Cash, Voucher, and Food Distribution during COVID-19: Learning Stream Kick-Off Event

May 13th, 2020 | 6:00 am ET

May 13th, 2020 | 10:00 am ET

Breakout Room Discussion Notes:

Prompts:	6 am event	10 am event
<p>What are the biggest challenges you've been facing in distribution of cash/voucher/food as a result of COVID-19?</p>	<p>Main Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we serve our beneficiaries and limit the transmission of COVID-19? For our staff and our beneficiaries? • How to document distributions/receipt of assistance for donor compliance/accountability while minimizing points of contact and mitigating risk of transmission? • How can we best work with the restrictions imposed by the government to improve access to cash/food/other resources during a lockdown situation? <p>Main Challenges:</p> <p>Restrictions to Access & Security:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictions in physical access to the beneficiaries due to security issues and travel restrictions. The added rules and regulations around social distancing is impacting how field work is conducted, forcing implementers to engage remotely. 	<p>Limitations and Restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to transportation/movement restrictions limits possibilities for distribution • Supply chain limitations - less market access • Data collection (monitoring) limited due to access issues • Lockdowns and curfews cause delays in delivering assistance • Donor restriction for program adjustments. For example, meeting the USAID FFP requirements for identifying beneficiaries. <p>Remote Work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel challenges, for example - harmonizing tools, schedules, and communication. • Coordination is a huge challenge. NGOs were not consulted regarding movement restrictions. Impacts ability to develop and execute distribution plans. • Lack of clarity around what the advocacy between NGOs, the US, and other governments has been.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendors' adaptations/compliance to COVID-19 protective measures as well as capacity to restock is limited in the wake of a lockdown. • Transportation of food from our national warehouse to the field is a challenge due to lockdown imposed by the national government and most of our staffs are working from home • The elderly and other vulnerable groups are not always able to participate because of the higher risk associated with COVID. Another issue with vulnerable groups is the misinformation being spread about COVID-19, specifically in rural area. • Liquidity is also one of the issue for Cash Program due to closure of banks during the lockdown period <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to regular market information • Disruption of FSP capacity to deliver cash • Changing modality of distribution to reduce exposure (ie electronic cash, vouchers) - timing issues mainly! • Market functionality: lockdown, intermittent supply of commodities, movement issues, transportation cost increased up to 60% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSOs are having a particularly difficult time adapting to this new environment. <p>Security:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for/availability of appropriate PPE for staff • Maintaining social distance between beneficiaries during distribution • With no travel, surge support that could usually be provided is not possible. • Some beneficiaries are not taking the Virus seriously as a pandemic, knowing that we added many facilities as well as distributed masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers (cultural/religious beliefs) <p>Modality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to organize cash distribution in a context of limited mobility and physical distancing. Some service providers do not have cash ready to distribute. Another challenge is liquidity of financial service providers with the restrictions in place. • Door-to-door distributions are not feasible, but may become possible in urban areas. • Conditional modalities required participants to work in cash-for-asset sites; however this activity cannot continue during COVID. • Use of thumbprints or requiring signatures for the distribution list proposes a risk. • Working with FSP in a context of inexistence of KYCs - this makes it literacy difficult to pivot distribution of cash distribution/transfer work to mobile money transfers
<p>What changes and adaptations are you making to your programming?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of e-vouchers and mobile money • Ensuring staff and volunteers have PPE • Dropping conditionalities e.g. cash for work • Increasing the ration size provided to cover several months and also expanding the types of goods to include local foods. Also increasing value of ration due to price increases • Changing distribution points in terms of locations, frequency and protocol to ensure physical distancing. Also staggering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing conditionalities for food assistance • Combining two distribution into one lump sum rather than multiple deliveries • Doing post distribution monitoring (PDM) and verification of beneficiaries by phone • Providing PPE for staff and applying safety measures such as sanitizing distribution points • Coordinating with community leaders on information sharing and coordination. • Flexible service agreements with vendors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with community volunteers and local leaders on sensitization, identification of beneficiaries • Training of vendors on safety methods • Conducting rapid market assessments • Phone PDMs • Providing WASH supplies (water and soap) either through transfers or at distribution points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switching from beneficiaries receiving cash to mobile transfers • Adapting WFP guidelines for distribution points including reducing the number of beneficiaries that gather up at a point, enforcing physical distancing. • Providing WASH assistance as part of transfers and at transfer points • Expanding the range of products that beneficiaries can access with vouchers - removing restrictions to allow beneficiaries to access local goods, WASH items and fresh produce • Working closely with community health workers to create awareness amongst communities at distribution points • Considering door-to-door deliveries. Providing take-home packages for school meals • Providing financial subsidies to vendors to maintain supply chain
<p>What key questions or capacity gaps are you facing that you would like more support on?</p>	<p>Remote Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing remote beneficiary targeting. • Engaging with local community organizations: How to strengthen capacity or the way we work with local organizations? • Issues around monitoring: movement restrictions have made it difficult for our staff to conduct monitoring. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IDEAL is working on a learning stream focused on Monitoring & Evaluation • Coordinating with internal and external stakeholders is challenging considering the working from home • Clear guidance on and funding for use of PPE. • Decision making between cash and food assistance, in kind distribution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How are programs adapting their cash for work programs specifically? ○ How are programs adapting cash/distribution in urban areas? • Donor strategies for the long term. How will this impact funding? • How to do distributions in urban areas? 	<p>Modality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the transfers for cash programming possible if not all beneficiaries have mobile phones? (for some countries, mobile money is not available, i.e. Yemen) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can we do multi-modality transfers? • Decision about selection of modality and frequent price monitoring. • How to manage the dynamic of changing from unconditional to conditional transfer programs: community councils? <p>Targeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to do beneficiary registration if HH visits are not possible? Cannot always rely on lists governments provide. If we do, we need to verify those lists • How to organize transparent, fast, distribution without fraud and theft-free distributions without risk of contamination? <p>Data Collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring data quality control for data collected in PDMs/best ways to collect data through mobile phones and ensure good quality.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring accountability of vendors and also to communities• Managing conditionalities - we have removed them now but need strategy for long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring of conditional cash transfers at field level.• Economic impact on communities• Need sufficient funding to address the needs of communities. Many people lost their access to their livelihoods due to COVID. This paired with inflation of prices and borders closing, means the ongoing livelihood interventions will be disturbed and households miss the opportunity of sustainable activities.
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