



For children and
equality for girls



INDEPENDENT EVALUATION REPORT

CORONAVIRUS PROGRAMME IN SOMALILAND

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	3
LIST OF FIGURES	3
ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. INTRODUCTION.....	15
1.1 Introduction and context.....	15
1.2 Background to the project.....	15
1.3 Purpose of the project final evaluation.....	16
1.4 Scope of the final valuation	16
1.5 Evaluation criteria.....	17
2. DESK REVIEW	18
2.1 Cash transfer programming in Somali emergency context	18
2.2 Gender-based violence risk in the context of cash-based transfers	18
2.3 Cash and Child Protection.....	19
2.4 Mobile cash transfers in the Somali context.....	19
2.5 Highlight of findings from past post distribution monitoring assessments	19
3. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	22
3.1 Respondents profile	22
3.2 Evaluation design and methodology	23
3.2.1 Secondary Data	23
3.2.2 Primary data collection.....	23
3.2.2.1 Quantitative survey sample	23
3.2.2.2 Key informant interviews (KIIs)	24
3.2.2.3 Focus group discussion (FGD)s.....	25
3.2.2.4 Documentation of case studies.....	25
3.3 Enumerator training and pre-testing of the tools	25
3.4 Data and data safety management.....	26
3.5 Data quality management	26
3.6 Data analysis and presentation.....	27
3.7 Safeguarding and ethics	27
3.8 Study limitations.....	27

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	29
4.0 Project overview	29
4.1 CHS1-Is the humanitarian response appropriate and relevant.....	29
4.1.1 Effects of covid-19 on the recipient households	29
4.1.2 Appropriateness of the cash transfers	30
4.1.3 Accessibility and functionality of the markets during the transfers.....	31
4.1.4 Recipient selection and fit with the objective of the cash transfers.....	32
4.2 CH2-Is the humanitarian response effective and timely	33
4.2.1 Planned versus achieved	33
4.2.2 Reception of cash transfers/grants	34
4.2.3 Safety in receiving and spending the cash.....	35
4.2.4 Sufficiency of the cash grants	36
4.2.5 Sharing received cash with other households not reached.....	36
4.2.6 How the cash grants were used	36
4.2.7 Effects of the cash grants	37
4.3 CH3-Is humanitarian response strengthening local capacity & avoiding negative effects?.....	38
4.3.1 Impact of the cash transfers on the intra-household decision making	38
4.3.2 Effect/Impact of the cash transfer on the household.....	39
4.3.3 Impact of cash grants on household stability and cohesion.....	40
4.3.4 Coping beyond the cash transfers.....	41
4.3.5 Effects of cash transfer on the local community.....	42
4.3.6 Effects of the cash transfers on the local markets.....	42
4.3.7 Markets post cash distribution period	43
4.3.8 Cash transfers impact on the environment.....	43
4.4 CH4-Is humanitarian response based on communication, participation, feedback?.....	44
4.4.1 Awareness about the cash transfer response	44
4.5 CH5-Are complaints welcomed and addressed?	45
4.6 CH6-Is humanitarian response coordinated and complementary.....	46
4.7 CH7-Humanitarian actors continuously learning and improving.....	47
4.7.1 Lessons learnt	47
4.7.2 How the lessons learnt have been utilized by partners & the government	48
4.8 CH8-Are staffs supported to do their job effectively, treated fairly & equitably?.....	48
4.9 CH9-Are resources managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose?.....	49
4.9.1 Efficiency of the transfers	49
4.9.2 Partnership and collaborations.....	49
4.10 Current needs of the IDP households.....	49

4.10.1	Appropriate method of addressing the needs	50
4.10.2	Current interventions.....	50
5.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS	51
5.1	Conclusions.....	51
5.2	Recommendations.....	54
	ANNEXES.....	58
	ANNEX 4: CASE STORIES.....	59
	MANAGEMENT RESPONSE.....	61

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Respondent breakdown by interview type, sex and age.....	22
Table 2:	Respondents by disability status.....	22
Table 3:	Respondents by region	22
Table 4:	Respondents groups	23
Table 5:	Quantitative sample distribution by district and sex	24
Table 6:	Pre-test sample	26
Table 7:	How appropriate was cash transfer approach to the covid-19 context?.....	30
Table 8:	Cash transfer recipients by region	34
Table 9:	Who made decision on how to spend the cash grant?.....	38
Table 10:	Impact of cash transfers on recipient households.....	39

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	Markets accessibility	32
Figure 2:	Were food and other commodities available in the local markets?.....	32
Figure 3:	Recipient's knowledge about the selection criteria and perception of its fairness.....	32
Figure 4:	Did the recipient receive cash transfer since 2020 and from whom.....	34
Figure 5:	Was the expected amount received and what method of cash transfer?.....	35
Figure 6:	Recipients' safety in receiving and spending the cash grants	35
Figure 7:	Was the cash grant sufficient?	36
Figure 8:	Impact of cash transfers on household stability and cohesion.....	41
Figure 9:	Impact of the cash transfers on the local markets.....	42

ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
CDC	Community Distribution Committees
CEFM	Child Early and Forced Marriages
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standards
CIDP	Country Integrated Development Plan
CLA	Cluster Level Associations
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CWC	Community Welfare Committees
CWDs	Children with Disabilities
DEC	Disaster Emergency Committee
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FSNU	Food Security and nutritional Analysis Unit
GBP	Great Britain Pounds
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MESAF	Ministry of Employment Social Affairs and Family
MOH	Ministry of Health
MPCA	multipurpose cash transfer assistance
MSCS	Most Significant Change Stories
NDRA	National Disaster Relief Agency
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODK	Open Data Kit
OEDC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPEs	Personal Protective Equipment
PWDs	People with Disabilities
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SGHs	Self-Help Groups
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
UASC	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USD	United States Dollar
WHO	World Health Organization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The DEC programme, funded by the 2019 Coronavirus Appeal was implemented in two phases: DEC Phase 1: August 1st 2020 to January 31st 2021 and DEC Phase 2: 31st January 2021 to August 30th 2022. The programme was implemented in Somaliland region, and specifically in Hargeysa and Burao districts. The programme had three expected outcomes. Of interest to this final evaluation was Outcome A: Most vulnerable families in IDP camps supported to address their basic needs including food, water for drinking and cleaning and hygiene product. A1.1.1. 592 Households (4518 individuals) benefit from multipurpose cash for their livelihood needs.

The purpose of the final evaluation was to analyse the specific multipurpose cash assistance activities and results of the DEC funded programme and make technical and operational suggestions for adjustment, recommend areas for improvement in programme delivery, particularly by capturing the current needs and gaps in humanitarian assistance in a devastating hunger crisis context, and finally to support the DEC on programme specific collective learning interventions.

Survey research method complemented by mixed methods for data collection was applied to assess the outcomes of the cash assistance component of the DEC programme. Quantitative and qualitative data was gathered from different sources to enable triangulation and comparison of views and facts. Qualitative data was gathered using key informant interviews and focus group discussions, while quantitative data was collected electronically using Open Data Kit (ODK) software. The study was also complemented by desk review of literature relevant to the evaluation.

The success of the cash transfer intervention was attributed to the clarity of the selection criteria, its fairness and the community driven approach that was used in the identification and selection of the recipients. A multi-level verification of the proposed list of potential recipients also ensured that no recipient would receive a cash grant from more than one source. This was made possible by involving the ministry of employment social affairs and family (MESAF), and the national disaster relief agency (NDRA), that manages cash transfer data base in the region.

Most recipients 227(97%) knew the reasons that they were selected to receive the cash transfers. Most also 228(97%) perceived the selection criteria as fair.

CHS 1 – Is humanitarian response appropriate and relevant?

The cash transfer approach was hailed as the most appropriate and strategic response that delivered immediate relief to the most vulnerable households in the IDP communities. In this regard, a total of 231(99%) of the respondents rated the approach as very appropriate. Primarily, it was very complementary to the ministry of health (MOH) covid-19 containment measures that restricted/limited population movements, prescribed observance of social distancing and use of personal protective equipment (PPEs). In this regard, cash transfers were made through mobile money to the recipient's mobile phones This therefore protected them from the risk of exposure to the covid-19 virus.

Findings showed that the approach helped to meet the most pressing immediate needs of the recipient households. The households were able to immediately purchase food, water, medicine, PPEs and pay for psychosocial support services. The recipients were also able to buy play items for their children, pay school fees after the schools had reopened and purchased learning materials for the children. According to the business grant recipients, the cash grants helped to restore their failed small businesses. This enabled them to immediately restore their incomes and hence their livelihoods. The approach was also hailed as

appropriate as it targeted empowering women, most of whom were heads of households among the most vulnerable families. In this regard, about 60% of the recipients were women.

According to the director of planning and national development at MESAF, the intervention was appropriate in that it targeted the informal settlements where majority of the poor and internally displaced people lived, with most being women and children. This view was similar to that of the Director for IDPs at the National Disaster Relief Agency (NDRA), who noted that the most vulnerable people were the most affected hence it made sense to target them. The director further noted that most of the targeted recipients did not have a source of income and resorted to using negative coping methods such as selling of family assets, giving up their daughters for child marriage in exchange for financial support, sending children to beg on the streets especially boys (noted the number of children on the streets remained high since), and family members in general reduced the number of meals taken per day.

The cash transfers were also appropriate in influencing gender and cultural dynamics. Available studies indicate that traditionally, in Somaliland, women are the primary caregivers with men being 90% of the time away from home¹. Women took care of the elderly, the sick and those living with disability. The patriarchal nature of the Somali community excluded women from key decision-making structures including at the household level. The project therefore was designed in a way that prioritized women either as direct recipients of cash or targeting female headed households. In this way, it gave women more grounds for effectively engaging with household decision making processes. It also laid a basis for participatory decision-making approaches in the households. Despite some men feeling albeit left out by not being selected as the recipients, most reported acceptance of the choice of women being the recipients.

The approach was also appropriate in that it took cognizance of existence of local markets within the communities hence the recipients didn't have to travel for long distance to purchase what they needed. This contributed to the observance of the MOH containment measures. The local markets were accessible and had diverse food and non-food commodities that the households required. In this regard, all 234(100%) of the surveyed recipients confirmed that the markets were accessible while another 229(98%) confirmed that food and other essential commodities were available in the markets.

CHS 2 – Is humanitarian response effective and timely?

With regards to the effectiveness of the cash transfer approach, a total of 234(100%) surveyed respondents confirmed to have received a cash transfer since the beginning of 2020. These included 80% women and 20% men. The recipients confirmed to have received the transfers from either Taakulo 164(70%) or from Nafis 70(30%). These translated to 180 women reached by Nafis with cash transfers for business restoration, and another 521 reached by Takuulo with unconditional cash transfers. Nafis recipients reported having received the transfer once with those that received from Takuulo having received multiple times. All the recipients 234(100%) received the full amount expected from Nafis or Takuulo. All 234(100%) received the cash through a mobile money transfer. No commission was charged on the transfers to the recipients. A total of 232(99%) of the recipients reported having safely received the cash transfer, while another 233(100%) reported having spent the cash grant safely. A total of 219(94%) of the recipients said the cash grant was sufficient to meet the most pressing basic needs of their households.

Containment measures introduced locally and internationally imposed significant challenges in the way the vulnerable households managed their income and households pre-existing vulnerabilities. There was great risk of exposure of the households to additional risk of a

¹ Save the Children, 2018

widening gap in food consumption. During the containment restrictions, households reported rapidly increasing needs that could have escalated to increased negative coping mechanisms. Timely cash assistance enabled the households to close this gap.

Key among the items purchased from the grant included food for all household members, water, education for children, health care, clothes and shoes, soap, sanitary pads and underwear. Some recipients paid electricity bills with only a small number spending some money on rent.

Findings indicated that the cash transfers were effective in improving the livelihood status of the recipient households. In this regard, 88% of the recipient households afforded quality and adequate meals. Examples were given of how each member of the household benefitted from the cash transfers. Reduced household stress resulted in improved safeguarding and reduction of violence against children and the adolescent girls including delayed and or complete absence of incidences of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and child labour. This was confirmed by the adolescent girls in Hargeysa who reported that during the entire duration of the cash transfers, none of their siblings under the age of 18 years got married off or engaged in child labour. 98(42%) respondents reported having been able to have their girl children continued attending school.

According to the adolescent boys, the cash transfers prevented them from being involved in harmful child labour, the risk of joining militia groups in the neighboring countries as a source of income. This further averted the risk of separation of young boys with their families in search of better life opportunities.

The cash transfers helped to reduce desperation and fear among the elderly and people living with disability. In this regard, the elderly people and people living with disabilities met their nutritional needs, sanitation kits as well as medicine. This reduced their fear of death from starvation and infections.

Cash grants also helped to improve the hygiene and sanitation of the recipient households as families were able to purchase water, soap and other necessary items for household use. The cash grants were reported to influence intra-household relations. The fact that men were no longer controlling the cash, they had to cultivate an attitude of mutual cooperation and trust towards their spouses to jointly make the right choices. This resulted in reduced stress levels that also brought with it reduced intimate partner violence and violence amongst the siblings. In return, this contributed to restoration of dignity and return to normalcy of the recipient households.

CHS 3 - Is humanitarian response strengthening local capacity and avoiding negative effects?

The cash transfers impacted local capacities. In this regard, views from the project team and further supported by the FGD participants indicated that from the support provided, women developed decision making skills. The cash transfers also led to women empowerment through the flexible cash transfers for business. The grants also enabled to create opportunities for women and girls to attend trainings in life skills, positive parenting, child safeguarding and peer to peer sessions (for the adolescent girls). Views expressed by the community leader in Burao indicated that the cash transfers helped to improve the financial management skills of the recipient families. It helped to develop prioritization and negotiation skills amongst the family members. It also contributed to strengthening resilience at the household level, particularly for the households that received conditional grants for business restoration.

The cash transfers also impacted the local markets. In this regard, there was increased purchasing power. New traders started businesses. Traders in general increased their stocks

and diversified commodities - the most significant effect of the cash transfers on the markets was availability of diverse food types as reported by 147(63%) of the survey respondents. This was followed by more small food businesses being started accounting for 63(27%) responses. Findings also indicated that the cash transfers did not affect the food prices, as 34(15%) respondents reported that normal food prices were maintained.

Whereas the evaluation findings from the focus group discussion participants indicated that the intervention had strengthened the intra-household decision making processes, and that there were no tensions at the household level, (a view also upheld by 100% survey respondents from the post distribution monitoring assessment (by Takuulo between October, 25 and November, 14 2020), the evaluation findings indicated that close to half 110(48%) of the respondents reported some tensions related to the cash transfers in their homes. The most significant cause was the woman being the recipient of the cash transfer as reported by 108(98%) respondents. Competing priority expenses came in second being mentioned by 32(29%) respondents, expenditure on unbudgeted items reported by 18(16%) respondents and needs surpassing the cash grant as reported by 8(7%) respondents. In few households, conflicts were due to absence of shared decisions between the spouses. Some men believed that the cash grant should have been transferred through them since they were the heads of the family. These contradictions may require further review.

Findings also indicated that some families were stigmatized and associated with covid-19. Some were assigned demeaning tags as '*Mrs covid-19*' because they were assisted by the covid-19 project. On the other hand, some adolescent girls and boys threatened to get married arguing that their caregivers had enough cash that would support them in the transition. This created tensions in the affected families. On the other hand, traditionally, its women and girls who take on the unpaid labour of looking after the sick, the elderly and people living with disability. After women received the cash grants and revived their small businesses, it was hard for them to fully provide this support. The role was delegated to others or at least was only partially provided.

CHS 4 - Is humanitarian response based on communication, participation and feedback?

Community-based structures were utilized in communicating and or providing feedback about the response. Recipients communicated more through the community distribution committees (CDCs), camp leaders, or through their self-help groups (SHGs)², whose officials in return directly communicated and or provided feedback to the project team. The same was reported about the complaint mechanisms. The recipients reported that the project designated mechanisms were not known to them but they used the CDCs as an avenue for communicating any complaints to the project teams. Regardless of the avenue used to communicate feedback or make a complaint, feedback was provided. The recipients and other stakeholders found the mechanisms to be appropriate and safe to use in the context of covid-19 (a hotline was provided to the CDCs). The involvement of MESAF and the NDRA officials in the verification of the recipient list was done to validate the selection criteria.

CH5-Are complaints welcomed and addressed?

Findings indicated that the feedback mechanism existed (hot line and email) but it was not known to all relevant stakeholders particularly the recipients of the cash transfers. Despite this, at least community coordination structures existed through which the recipients were able

²<https://www.candlelightsomal.org/?p=2174>: The SHG Approach was initiated by Nafis Network in Somaliland in 2013 and was piloted in small groups. After a successful pilot, it was fully launched in 2014 in Somaliland and particularly in Hargeysa and Burao. A total of 12, 116 people are members of the SHGs. A total of 7, 895 small businesses have been started by the members. By 2022, an estimated total savings of \$996, 500 were recorded. The SHG cluster comprises of 11 SHG promoting organizations working in the two districts under the leadership of Nafis Network. In the DEC programme, the SHGs played part in the identification and selection of the cash transfer recipients.

to raise any concerns, as confirmed by the community distribution committees. Once feedback was received by the community-based mechanisms, they escalated it to the respective project teams. In this regard therefore, the recipients reported that their feedback was taken into consideration and acted upon. Feedback was provided in real-time. Feedback obtained helped to initiate follow up and monitoring of the recipients. The recipients (women, men including those with disability) reported that they felt safe using the available feedback mechanisms. The feedback was termed as safe and appropriate in the context of covid-19 in that the recipients didn't have to visit the project teams in their offices but rather approached the community coordination structures, or made a telephone call (for those that had access to it).

CHS 6 - Is humanitarian response coordinated and complementary?

The response team coordinated well with other emergency coordination structures. These included the humanitarian clusters, child protection working group (convened by MESAFA), self-help group approach cluster (SHG), cash working group (chaired by CARE Somalia), food security cluster (chaired by World Vision & co-chaired by the ministry of agriculture), the cash working group (CWG) and the multi sectoral coordination group (convened monthly by UN OCHA & NDRA). At the programme level, monthly partners update meetings were held with the DEC team whose agenda included providing updates, challenges, changes realized and successes. The coordination was successful and relevant. According to the project team, the intervention was very complementary to the government emergency response efforts. This view was similar to that of the government officials and other respondents that the project helped to advance adherence to the MOH containment measures through the target households.

CHS7-Humanitarian actors continuously learning and improving

Findings indicated that valuable lessons were learnt by the intervention stakeholders. Of great emphasis was the observance of the conflict sensitivity and the do no harm principles exercised particularly at the beneficiary selection stage. These approach, that was community driven, and further verified by the government, helped to mitigate the risk of tensions and conflicts at the community level. In addition, findings also showed that new ways of working that were technologically aided were hailed as good lessons as effective coordination was reported to have taken place virtually.

CHS8-Are staffs supported to do their job effectively, treated fairly & equitably?

From the findings, despite two positions remaining unfilled at Plan level (full time project M&E officer and Project Coordinator), Plan team used the available human resources to effectively coordinate with the partners to deliver a successful response. Teams from the three partners reported to have been earlier trained in cash programming even though no refreshers were provided during the project period. Such refreshers would have helped to strengthen the team further. The teams also reported having received adequate technical support from the Plan UK team, which helped to improve the quality of the response.

CHS 9 – Are resources managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose?

Concerning management and responsible use of project resources for their intended purpose, findings indicated that efficiency was observed with 233(100%) of the recipients confirming having received their transfers according to the schedule agreed with the project team. Cash transfers were very timely and efficient (no commissions were charged on the recipients including when expending the money received). Transfers were made in full. The mobile money company took responsibility for accuracy of the recipient details including the mobile numbers. No cases of wrong transfers or fraud were reported.

The most critical current needs of the recipients were explored. This was meant to inform future response and to understand changing needs due to deteriorating hunger crisis. In this regard therefore, the most pressing current needs include food, water, education, health care

and soap and sanitary pads. Adolescent girls face the risk of CEFM while children with disabilities (physical, mental) have limited access to education opportunities. Adolescent boys may also be at risk of drugs abuse. According to the adolescent girls in Hargeysa, the most affected people include adolescent girls living with disabilities (physical, mental) and young mothers. Others mentioned by MESAF are the children working and living on the streets, most of whom were pushed out of their homes by the effects of covid-19.

Among the most preferred approach for addressing the current most pressing needs is food voucher, cash transfers or support for services including education and health. Others include cash grants for business, seed vouchers, distribution of non-food items including dignity kits identified mostly by adolescent girls. Men also identified skills and jobs creation, while women and adolescent girls identified trauma counselling.

Recommendations

	Key findings	Recommendations
1	The community approach used in the beneficiary selection proved very effective and embraced the do no harm principles by ensuring all was done transparently hence any potential conflicts were pre-empted.	It is recommended to continue implementing this approach in the future interventions with some adjustments-to involve more divers self-help groups during the development of the selection criteria. This will ensure it is exhaustive of the various vulnerabilities at the community level at the time.
2	Key stakeholders like the relevant government line ministries (NDRA and MESAF) confirmed to have participated in the review of the selection criteria as well as in the verification of the final cash recipients. They provided their feedback directly to the project team in this regard. On the other hand, they were not involved in the initial development of the selection criteria.	It is recommended that Plan International and other actors should continue to involve the government stakeholders in beneficiary selection. This should be embraced as a good practice. It should also be integrated as a requirement in any frameworks developed to guide selection and targeting of cash grants beneficiaries. One further step to take would be exploring different ways to strengthen the involvement of the government stakeholders at an earlier stage.
3	Although this finding is not directly associated with the project itself, it is worth highlighting that some recipients reported incidences of stigmatization for having received support from the project. Some were labeled 'Mrs. covid-19'	It's recommended that the project should continue supporting community education on the concept of cash programming to mitigate potential stigma associated with responses like Covid-19. Relevant messages should be integrated in the other awareness campaigns on the same or different agendas. It is also recommended that further risk assessments to be conducted in order to mitigate any harm.

4	<p>The recipients who received business grant reported that their businesses were still operational at the time of the evaluation. This will sustain them beyond the project period by providing more sustainable source of livelihood. Further linked to the flexible cash transfers, local traders reported that with the cessation of the cash transfers, businesses had started to decline as purchasing power had reduced and fewer items were purchased per customer.</p>	<p>It's recommended that the programmes continue to integrate business grants in the future emergency responses as they hold a promise to sustainable household livelihoods. Longer term measures would ensure market stability than when seasonal cash transfers are given. The pyramid should be inverted to have more beneficiaries receive conditional business grants than flexible cash transfers. This will ensure more recipients transition to sustainable livelihoods post emergencies. It is recommended that Plan International adopts a cohort system to graduate those fully established and stable households to create space for new intake.</p>
5	<p>One key recommendation of NDRA was planning a joint impact assessment involving the government line ministries and other key stakeholders.</p>	<p>As recommended by NDRA inclusion of, and allocation of resources for joint impact assessment in future responses should be considered. This should also include periodical joint monitoring activities to ensure the government appraises the progress of the response, and that the response benefits from government feedback.</p>
6	<p>The protracted nature of emergencies in Somaliland including drought, cyclones, flood, desert locusts, clan conflicts and now covid-19 requires that budgeting takes into account the fluidity and fluctuation of the foreign currency (USD), which is the alternative currency used in local purchases and other transactions in Somaliland. High inflation was reported to have significantly influenced the cost of food and non-food commodities and negatively affected the stability of the small businesses supported through the conditional cash grants.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the future cash transfer responses consider inflation in the food basket determination. The food basket size should also be based on the household size.</p>
7	<p>Although findings confirmed that the feedback mechanism existed (hot line and email) it was reported that they were not known to all relevant stakeholders particularly the recipients of the conditional cash grants.</p>	<p>It is recommended that at the intervention design stage, it's important to consult with the affected populations to clarify the feedback mechanisms through which they would prefer to give and receive feedback. If other structures such as the community-based coordination committees are preferable, this should be clarified at that stage to ensure all recipients had similar information from the beginning. A hotline should be installed and communicated to all the beneficiaries from the beginning to ensure they can get rapid support whenever it's needed. This will ensure effective</p>

		communication and feedback between the recipients and the project team.
8	Results of the past assessments ³ linked the increasing cases of violence against children including SGBV and marginalization of PWDs to the effects of protracted emergencies including drought and effects of covid-19 pandemic.	<p>It's recommended that Plan International should continue ensuring that cash-based programmes integrate protection, GBV and inclusion topics targeting particularly the recipients. Also, to include topics on positive parenting sessions particularly to raise awareness on child/youth rights (right to participate) as well as enhance communication skills for caregivers of PWDs.</p> <p>In addition, clear mitigation measures against risks associated with protection and SGBV should continue to be integrated in the design, implementation and reporting of future cash interventions. In this regard, PDM questions should include questions to monitor women and girls and other vulnerable group's participation, access to and safety of coordination, communication and feedback mechanisms. Protection specialists should be attached to cash programmes to ensure all safeguarding issues are well documented and acted upon.</p>
9	Findings showed that the only gap in terms of coordination was with the nutrition working group.	It's recommended that future cash programmes should also coordinate with the nutrition working group to facilitate referrals of cases relevant to the working group.
10	The covid-19 response coordination structures provided a strategic platform for learning what other actors were doing, as well as communicating progress and successes.	It's recommended that continuation of active participation in the existing community and national level coordination structures in future responses as well.
11	Most pressing current needs were similar to those that the intervention had been addressing.	It's recommended that despite the similarity in the current most pressing needs to those that the intervention addressed, it might be good to explore other alternative forms of cash programming to respond to the needs. For instance, more sustainable approaches like giving conditional business grants accompanied by skills training and close technical supervision and monitoring might deliver more sustainable livelihoods options than flexible unconditional cash transfers. Seed vouchers for those that can practice agriculture may also be a more sustainable option. These approaches may also be accompanied with mobilizing and encouraging women, men and

³ Food Security and nutritional Analysis (FSNU) briefing of 3rd February 2020; post-distribution monitoring assessment undertaken by Plan International and its partners in July 2020; Child Protection & Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Baseline Assessment, Final Report, June 2020 (Plan International).

		youths to either form or join the existing community-based savings and credit schemes to enable them to build household savings. This would enable them to secure family livelihoods.
12	MESAF reported that it is contemplating reviving the women economic forum through which sustainable livelihood support initiative is being negotiated.	It's recommended that Plan International follows up with MESAF to establish how the future interventions could align with this upcoming initiative.
13	. Although, the PDM findings were used to inform relevant adaptation/adjustment of the implementation, PDMs were not conducted after each cycle of cash transfer.	Post distribution monitoring (PDM) should continue to be included in the future interventions to continually track the performance of the programme. It is also recommended that PDMs are conducted every end of a cash transfer cycle. Findings should be used to inform relevant adaptation/adjustment of the approach in implementation. For objectivity and quality assurance, its recommended that PDMs are conducted by external competent specialists (to the extent possible)to ensure feedback obtained is comprehensive and meets quality threshold to inform the programme.
14	According to the community members participated in this evaluation , the following areas should be considered in the design of future replication or scale up of future interventions: i. Increase the number of beneficiaries. ii. Increase the size of cash grants. iii. Provision of vocational training skills iv. Water trucking intervention during emergencies.	i. Support more sustainable livelihoods options for the IDP communities such as conditional business grants. ii. There is need to increase the number of beneficiaries in the next phase iii. Increase the size of the cash grant by factoring in the inflation rate and household size (There may be need to negotiate this adjustment with the Cash Working Group) v. Equip the young people and men with vocational skills for self-reliance vi. WASH interventions should be included in the response i.e., water tankering or as water for enterprise (IGAs).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and context

The Food Security and nutritional Analysis (FSNU) briefing of 3rd February 2020 indicated that desert locusts and floods posed a risk of crisis (IPC Phase 3) in many parts of Somalia/Somaliland by mid-2020. Based on food security data collected by FSNAU, FEWS NET, and partners in the post-Deyr 2019 food security assessment, an estimated 1.15 million people were in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4). From February to September, the population in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4), who were in need of urgent humanitarian food assistance, was expected to rise by 40% to 1.61 million people. More than 2.9 million people were expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

This situation was exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in the country. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), from 3rd January 2020 to 2nd Sept. 2022, a total of 27,020 COVID-19 cases had been reported in Somalia with confirmed 1, 361 deaths⁴. In Somaliland, on March 31st 2019, the Ministry of Health announced confirmation of the first two cases of COVID-19. This was followed by creation of a National Committee to prevent and respond to the pandemic. Subsequently, following the advice of the committee, as part of the containment measures, schools were closed, social events and gatherings cancelled and prohibited, and flights and travels were restricted. The government issued guidelines for one month starting from 19th March. Khat chewing establishments were closed, and individual guidance was issued for mosques. After that, restrictions were extended at different times⁵.

Food security outcome indicator, and contributing factor data collected during the post-Deyr IDP household survey in November 2019, indicated that 18% of the total IDP population of 2.6 million was in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Most IDP settlements (7 out of 12) were classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), while IDP settlements in Hargeisa, Laasanood, Bosaaso, and Mogadishu were classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2)⁶.

The containment measures had negative effects on families and more so on girls. For instance, Plan's baseline survey conducted in early 2019 revealed that FGM incidences had increased by 61% during the school closure. Other key protection risks that faced girls and young women included sexual violence reported by (52%), increased domestic work load (37%), physical and humiliating punishment against girls (29%) and child early and forced marriage (CEFM) (21%)⁷.

1.2 Background to the project

The 18 months "2020 Coronavirus Appeal" grant from the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) was implemented in two phases: DEC Phase 1: August 1st 2020 to January 31st 2021 and DEC Phase 2: 31st January 2021 to August 30th 2022 by Plan International in partnership with Taakulo Somali Community (Takuulo) and Nafis Network. The cash transfers intervention had a budget of GBP250, 000. The intervention targeted 592 households (4, 518 individuals) of the most vulnerable populations in three (3) IDP camps in Burao (18-May, Bawaaqo and Alla Amen) and three in Hargeysa (Nasohablood C, Qalax and Mohamed Mooge B). The aim was to provide a non-conditional multipurpose cash transfer assistance to meet their most pressing basic needs, with particular focus on food security. This would enhance the purchasing power of these households to avert further deterioration of their economic security.

⁴ <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/so>

⁵ Plan International Somalia/Somaliland, Evaluation Report End Line Evaluation for Child Protection and FGM Abandonment Project in Somaliland

⁶ <https://fsnau.org/downloads/Somalia-Food-Security-Outlook-Feb-Sept%202020.pdf>

⁷ Plan International, 2020, Child Protection and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Assessment in Hargeysa and Burao, Somaliland Region.

The intervention was guided by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) seasonal analysis (Feb 3, 2020), and post-distribution monitoring assessment undertaken by Plan International and its partners in July 2020. The assessments concluded that food, water and protection were priority needs in the target IDP camps. The intervention further set out to address the negative coping mechanisms that the displaced communities had resorted to due to the inadequacy of emergency responses. Finally, it set out to raise awareness on the health, social and gender-related impact due to the severity of the virus and movement restrictions that forced schools and other social gatherings to be closed.

The project contributed towards three outcome areas as follows;

- A. Most vulnerable IDP families supported to address their basic needs including food, water for drinking and cleaning and hygiene products.
- B. Increased public awareness on girls' education and on the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse that have heightened during the crisis
- C. The affected population have access to information on the response and complaint mechanism

Of interest to this evaluation was outcome A intervention A1.1.1. as follows;

Outcome A: Most vulnerable families in IDP camps supported to address their basic needs including food, water for drinking and cleaning and hygiene products.

A1.1.1. 592 Households (4, 518 individuals) benefit from multipurpose cash for their livelihood needs.

1.3 Purpose of the project final evaluation

The purpose of the final evaluation was to;

- 1) Analyse the specific multipurpose cash assistance activities and results of the DEC funded programme in the context of the DEC-funded programmes and make technical and operational suggestions for adjustment.
- 2) Recommend areas for improvement in programme delivery, particularly by capturing the current needs and gaps in humanitarian assistance in a devastating hunger crisis context.
- 3) Support the DEC on programme specific collective learning interventions.

1.4 Scope of the final valuation

The final evaluation assessed the DEC Funded COVID-19 appeal project delivered by Plan International in Somaliland in partnership with Taakulo and Nafis NGOs. Due to the ongoing crises in the region, the evaluation was limited in scope, focusing only on the multipurpose cash assistance component of the project and learning for future emergency programming. The consultant was not expected to draw conclusions on Plan International's general country response strategy or approaches, but was rather limited to the multiple cash transfer component. Data collection was limited to Hargeysa and Burao, the two locations where the project was implemented. A total of six (6) IDP camps were visited for data collection, these included three (3) in Burao (18-May, Bawaaqo and Alla Amin) and three (3) in Hargeysa (Nasohablood C, Qalax and Mohamed Mooge B). The final evaluation involved all relevant stakeholders including government officials, cash transfer recipient households, implementing partner NGOs, Community Distribution Committees (CDCs), Community Welfare Committees (CWCs), local traders, Camp Leaders, community leaders and adolescent girls and boys.

1.5 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation was guided by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) criteria as a framework, integrating the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS). In this regard, it aimed to respond to two key evaluation objectives as follows.

1. To assess, in relation to the cash component of the project and in line with the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS):
 - CHS 1 – Is humanitarian response appropriate and relevant?
 - CHS 2 – Is humanitarian response effective and timely?
 - CHS 3 - Is humanitarian response strengthening local capacity and avoiding negative effects?
 - CHS 4 - Is humanitarian response based on communication, participation and feedback?
 - CHS 5 – Are complaints welcomed and addressed?
 - CHS 6 - Is humanitarian response coordinated and complementary?
 - CHS 7 – Are humanitarian actors continuously learning and improving?
 - CHS 8 – Are staff supported to do their job effectively and are they treated fairly and equitably?
 - CHS 9 – Are resources managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose?

The evaluation also integrated cross-cutting themes in the data collection and in the final analysis. These included protection and safeguarding, disability, diversity and inclusion and environmental sustainability.

2. To provide recommendations for future programming including areas for improvement in programme delivery, particularly by capturing the unmet and changing needs, challenges and gaps in humanitarian operations.

A *Framework for Questions of the Evaluation* was provided to guide development of data collection tools. Relevant modifications were made in consultation with Plan International Somalia/Somaliland and Plan International UK teams.

See Annex 1: Framework for Questions of the Evaluation.

See Annex 2: Final Data Collection Tools.

2. DESK REVIEW

2.1 Cash transfer programming in Somali emergency context

Cash-based interventions have been used by humanitarian organisations in Somalia since 2003. Initially, significant variations in transfer values were occasionally implemented by different organisations leading to different transfer values in the same locations. It was against this backdrop, and as a response to the increasing number of agencies using cash-based interventions to respond to the 2016-2017 drought, that the Somalia Cash Working Group (CWG) started convening in February 2017. The aim of the CWG is to streamline the design, development, and implementation of cash-based interventions in Somalia. Pursuant to these aims, the CWG provides quarterly changes to the cost of the Somalia's full minimum expenditure basket (MEB) and market performance to humanitarian organisations implementing cash-based intervention in Somalia⁸.

By June 2022, available updates indicated that there was a total value transferred cash amounting to about USD62million in Somalia reaching about 4.5million beneficiaries (disaggregation not provided). This cash assistance reached 211, 746 beneficiaries in Hargeysa and 113, 034 in Burao. Most of the cash assistance was unconditional (4.3million) and transferred through mobile money (2.1million)⁹. Similarly, cash assistance during the DEC programme response was provided through mobile money. This was to ensure the response was aligned to the MOH covid-19 response protocols or restricted movements and social distancing.

2.2 Gender-based violence risk in the context of cash-based transfers

The use of mobile money also ensured adequate safeguards to mitigate incidences of SGBV among women and girls. According to the UNFPA, more specifically, mobile money allows women to have a discreet way to access assistance. This modality also permits beneficiaries to reach out to hotlines or other specialised services since they already have a cell phone and a SIM card. The majority of cash interventions in the country have complaint and feedback mechanisms in place, and some agencies also have linkages with existing specialised protection services¹⁰. However, several organisations mention the fact that even if cash assistance is distributed to women via mobile money, and that consequently they receive a SIM card to access it, sometimes a man in the household keeps the cell phone, preventing the woman from having real access to the reporting mechanisms or making it more difficult for her to contact specialised services. In addition, GBV specialised services coverage remains low considering the size of the country and the very high needs¹¹.

To mitigate the risk of SGBV and exclusion (that may arise from community led selection approaches) in cash transfers, many cash interventions have set up community committees and community mechanisms to engage with the beneficiaries, trying as much as possible to have a fair representation of minorities, women, marginalised groups or ones at risk of exclusion. Some organisations have found ways to bypass this and mitigate those risks, for example by having relevant women/minority groups as a prerequisite to be part of the cash assistance¹².

8

https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/som_cash_and_markets_quarterly_dashboard_jan_to_mar_2022.pdf

⁹ <https://data.humdata.org/visualization/somalia-cash-programing-v4/>

¹⁰ <https://gbvaor.net/node/1054>

¹¹ <https://Somalia%20-%20National%20GBV%20strategy%202018-2020.pdf>

¹² ibid

2.3 Cash and Child Protection

According to CALP network, the use of cash transfers in a broad range of child protection activities, including child protection in emergencies, is a relatively new area of work. As a result, there is a lack of extensive guidance, standards and tools, which means that evidence on programme impact is often weaker than in other emergency response sectors. Furthermore, to date, very little cash transfer programming has been designed and implemented with the explicit intention of achieving child protection outcomes. Cash transfers are linked to their ability to protect children from exploitation through forced marriages or paid work, the risk of joining militia as a source of income. Available evidence shows that cash-based programmes also have the potential to expose children to the risk of protection violations. For instance, in certain forms and under certain circumstances, cash transfer programmes can cause an increase in child labour. By its nature, involving children in cash-for-work programmes increase their workloads in ways that have potential negative outcomes including work that could be dangerous or that prevents them from attending educational opportunities. Child labour can also increase when cash transfer programmes lead to increased agricultural productivity as a result of investment in livelihoods assets (eg, livestock). Children may end up providing childcare for their younger siblings or carrying out chores normally done by their parents while the parents work longer hours. Cash-for-work programmes may even attract children to engage in the work activities themselves. According to UNICEF, cash transfers targeted at children's institutions have a likelihood of causing family separation with children getting more attracted to join the institutions than staying in their homes. It is therefore noble that the design of cash transfer programmes carefully considers the likely effects of the cash transfers on the protection indicators for children, and integrates such risk mitigation measures to avert any such violations¹³.

2.4 Mobile cash transfers in the Somali context

In 2009, Somaliland's biggest mobile network operator, Telesom, launched their mobile payment service, ZAAD, and today more than 10% of the 3.8 million inhabitants are subscribed to the service. As with other mobile money systems, one can transfer, receive, and deposit money with ZAAD. The mobile money service is used for different purposes such as paying for groceries, dinner at the restaurant, or electricity and others. Payments in Somaliland that are done via mobile money services makes the medium appear to be the most convenient financial tool, especially for merchant payments. In most shops there is a ZAAD account number written on a board that customers should use when paying for their products. Available sources indicate that the service is special compared to other mobile money services, as it there is no charge when using it. Instead, Telesom ZAAD gets profit from different services, such as airtime recharge¹⁴. In Somaliland there are no international commercial banks running, because of the lack of recognition as an independent country. Instead, Somalilanders have been depending on Mobile Transfer Operators such as Dahabshiil bank, that allow for international remittance transfers¹⁵.

2.5 Highlight of findings from past post distribution monitoring assessments

A total of two post distribution monitoring assessments (PDM) relevant to the cash transfers component of the DEC programme were done during the lifetime of the project. These included the PDM carried out by Takuulo between October 25th and November 14th 2020 (DEC Phase I and ERF Covid-19 (GH Funds) in Alla-amin, Barwaqo and Eighteen (18) May IDP camps in Burao district. The main objective of this PDM was to assess the quality of the cash distribution process, expenditure share and its immediate impact on the lives of the intended

¹³ <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Cash-Protection-low-res2.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.ictworks.org/the-rise-of-services-in-somaliland/#.YxIgs-xBwdU> mobile-money-

¹⁵ ibid

beneficiaries. Combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were utilized. Reflection of the sample size was missing in the PDM report. A second PDM was carried out between 27th December 2019 and 10th January 2021 (DEC Phase I and ERF Covid-19 (GH Funds)), by an external consultant. It covered Hargeisa and Burao. The aim of the PDM was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the DEC Phase I and ERF Covid19 (GH Funds). Specifically, the PDM aimed to assess whether the beneficiary selection criteria were appropriate, timelines for distribution, appropriateness of the distribution sites and the availability of proper complaint and feedback mechanisms for the recipients. The PDM also assessed the distribution process in relation to gender perspectives, the usefulness of the cash transfer and sanitation products and whether the transfers contributed in meeting the immediate basic needs of the recipients. A total of 176 respondents participated. These included 68 households' surveys, 10 FGDs and 16 key informant interviews.

Findings from the PDMs indicated that 80% of the recipients had received relevant information from the partner concerning the project. This was part of fulfilment of the accountability to the affected populations. All the respondents confirmed receiving the same amount of cash that they had been informed and didn't pay any commissions for registration. The cash distribution process was safe. All money was received through ZAAD mobile money transfer. It was safe to access and utilize the money at the household and community levels. Majority of the recipients reported that the cash grant was sufficient to cover their basic needs. Inflation was cited as a concern during the PDMs. To a great extent, women made the decision on how to spend the cash, even though men were equally consulted over the decisions. The former situation was linked to the role of the mother being responsible for domestic affairs including what was needed at home. All (100%) of the surveyed recipients reported that there was no dispute over the cash received. This view was however contradicted by the findings of the final evaluation, which indicated that tensions were experienced in close to 50% of the surveyed recipient households.

On how the recipients spent the cash transfers, the PDMs indicated that beneficiaries spent most of the cash on food. Other expenses included on water, medical services or payment of school fees, payment of rent and debt repayment among others. 23% of the surveyed beneficiaries recommended that the project increase the cash amounts while 20% recommended to increase both the cash and the project duration, food distribution (10%) and to also increase the number of beneficiaries (13%).

The cash transfers were reported to impact the livelihoods of the recipient households through purchase of food and other basic necessities, or from establishing small businesses. Cash transfers helped to restore dignity of the recipient households as they were facilitated to access sanitary items and dignity kits (for women and girls).

While 74% of the survey respondents reported being aware of the existing complaint and feedback mechanism, they confirmed that the community distribution committee, the cluster level associations (CLAs) and the camp leaders were the only existing feedback and complaint mechanisms. These structures provided the link between the recipients and the project implementers. Some however reported there being a telephone number at Takuulo that the recipients could call and give feedback even though it was only known to few. these findings were very consistent with the final evaluation findings.

In conclusion therefore, the PDM findings were very consistent with the final evaluation findings on the appropriateness of the cash transfers in meeting the immediate needs of the recipient households, the impacts that the transfers had on the household members, structures of coordination and feedback among others. The information gap about the existence of a feedback mechanism and use by the recipients was also flagged by the PDMs. Most recipients reported having been briefed about the objective of the intervention. Many perceived the selection criteria as fair and the amount given as significantly sufficient to meet their immediate basic needs. The PDMs have therefore provided a good basis against which

to build on the results and the conclusions of the final evaluation. Findings were also consistent with the objective and the focus of the intervention.

The PDM results were useful in guiding adaptation/adjustments in approach during the project implementation. In this regard, findings reported that despite there being limited communication about the available formal mechanisms for communication and feedback, use of the available communication-based mechanisms had helped to fill the gap.

At the final evaluation stage, PDM findings were used to devise means of involving more males in the evaluation. PDM samples indicated limited participation of males. In this regard, the evaluation sample included men only FGDs, adolescent boys FGD and inclusion of more male traders in the interviews to increase the male voice and feedback in the evaluation.

3. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Respondents profile

A total of 323 (246 females, 77 males) people participated in the final evaluation. By age, these included 23 adolescent boys and girls aged 15-19 years¹⁶ and 300 adults above 18yrs. In total, 12 adolescent girls and 11 adolescent boys (15-19yrs) participated.

By **category of respondent**, the respondents included 235 (189 females, 46 males) survey respondents. All the survey respondents were adults. Another 72 (49 females, 23 males) participated in the FGDs with 23 of these being adolescent girls and boys). Another 16 (8 females, 8 males) participated in the key informant interviews – all of them being adults. Summary of the sample is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Respondent breakdown by interview type, sex and age

	Adult Male	Adolescent Boy	Adult Female	Adolescent Girl	Total
Survey	46		189		235
FGDs	12	11	37	12	72
KIIs	8		8		16
Total	77		246		323

By **disability status**, of the total surveyed respondents, 51(22%) reported to be persons living with disability. Further distribution was as follows.

Table 2: Respondents by disability status

	Total	Hargeysa	Burao	Male	Female
Total	235	52	183	46	189
Yes (Living with disability)	51	20	31	9	42
No	184	32	152	37	147

By **region**, 99 respondents (83 females, 16 males) were from Hargeysa and 223(164 females, 59 males) from Burao. The breakdown is presented in the table below.

Table 3: Respondents by region

	Total	Hargeysa	Burao
Total	235	22%	78%
Hargeysa	52	100%	0%
Burao	183	0%	100%

By **household status**, 193 (82%) of the survey respondents were household heads while another 42(18%) were not. Of the surveyed household heads, 77% were females and 23% males. On average, 9 people were living in one household. By **marital status**, most survey respondents were married accounting for 188(80%) of the respondents followed by those that were divorced 23(10%), widowed 15(6%), separated 5(2%) and single/never married 4(2%). In all cases, women were more than males.

¹⁶ Plan International age definition of an adolescent person

3.2 Evaluation design and methodology

Survey research method complemented by mixed methods for data collection was applied to assess the outcomes of the cash assistance component of the DEC programme. Quantitative and qualitative data was gathered from different sources to enable triangulation and comparison of views and facts. Qualitative data was gathered using key informant interviews and focus group discussions, while quantitative data was collected electronically using Open Data Kit (ODK) software. The study was also complemented by desk review of literature relevant to the evaluation. Further description of the methodology is provided below.

3.2.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data was generated from review of documents relevant to the assignment. Literature reviewed was used to guide review of the proposed evaluation questions, development of survey questions and generation of relevant background information about the project, target beneficiaries, past successes, lessons learnt and findings from previous reviews of similar projects, as well as available researches on the evaluation focus area. Desk review was done at two levels: Internal and external. Internal desk review focused on internal programme documents while external desk review focused on other literature relevant to the evaluation. See Annex 2: List of Desk Review Materials.

3.2.2 Primary data collection

Primary data was gathered using survey method, focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Documentation of case stories was also done with recipients of the one-of business grants.

Table 4: Respondents groups

Data collection tool	Respondent groups
Quantitative survey	Direct project beneficiaries
Key informant interviews (KIIs)	Stakeholders including MESAF (Director, Department of planning and national development) Director National Disaster Relief Agency, IDP camp leaders, community leaders, leaders of community distribution committees, local traders and the implementing partners (Nafis, Taakulo, Plan).
Focus group discussion (FGD)s	Unconditional cash transfers and business grant recipients, community distribution committees and adolescent boys and girls drawn from the recipient households

3.2.2.1 Quantitative survey sample

The quantitative sample was based on the project **Outcome A: Most vulnerable families in IDP camps supported to address their basic needs including food, water for drinking and cleaning and hygiene products.** **A1.1.1. 592 Households (4, 518 individuals)** benefit from multipurpose cash for their livelihood needs.

In determining the sample size, Raosoft Sample Size Calculator was used, which uses a very high degree of accuracy in generating sample from finite study populations. Using the calculator, a sample of 234(s) households (represented by one recipient each) was generated from the project target of 592 households using a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$ and 95% confidence level; $P = 0.5$ (Raosoft, 2004). Guided by the UNFPA population estimation survey of Somalia of 2014, and the provided sampling frame that contained a total of 671 households reached

(150¹⁷ through business grants; 521 unconditional cash transfers), the sample was distributed proportionately to the total reach as follows.

Table 5: Quantitative sample distribution by district and sex

	Sample distribution	Intended - Males (50%)	Achieved – Males 2%	Intended - Females (50%)	Achieved – Females 98%
Hargeysa	52 (22%)	26	1	26	51
	Sample distribution	Intended - Males (50.7%)	Achieved – Males 24.5%	Intended - Females (49.3%)	Achieved – Females 75.4%
Burao	183 (78%)	94	45	92	138
Total Hargeysa+ Burao	235	94	46	144	189

Sampling note: While the above sample distribution by sex was gender balanced at least as guided by the UNFPA Somalia Population Estimation Survey of 2014¹⁸, fewer men were available to participate in the survey. Men were mostly engaged in livelihoods activities away from home. In addition, fewer men were included as recipients. In Hargeysa, only women received a business grant. In Burao, women and men received the unconditional cash transfers. Only women received the business grant in Burao as well.

In total, 235¹⁹ surveys (accounting for 100.4% success rate) were conducted with adult males and female heads of households. These included 183(77.87%) in Burao and 52(22.13%) in Hargeysa. Of the total surveyed, 189(80%) were female and 46(20%) males. To increase the number of male respondents in the evaluation, separate focus group discussions were held with men and adolescent boys in every region. More male traders than females also participated in the interviews.

A sampling range of 3 (Kth number) was adopted in selecting the survey respondents (recipients) guided by the sampling frames provided. No child headed households received the cash or business grants in both locations.

A total of 6 enumerators (3 females, 3 males) were engaged in conducting the surveys. These included four (4) in Burao and two (2) in Hargeysa. Each conducted 14-15 interviews per day for 3 days.

3.2.2.2 Key informant interviews (KIIs)

Key informant interviews were conducted with 16 (8 male, 8 females²⁰) respondents as planned at the inception stage of this evaluation. These were purposively selected stakeholders who were involved in the intervention in the project locations. A good diversity was considered to ensure good representation of all those involved. The respondents included a representative of MESAF (Director, Department of planning and national development) Director National Disaster Relief Agency, IDP camp leaders, community leaders, leaders of

¹⁷ Later the partner confirmed that actually the total reach for the business cash grants was 180. 30 cases were missed in the sampling but that was not significant enough to affect the sample distribution.

¹⁸ <https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Population-Estimation-Survey-of-Somalia-PESS-2013-2014.pdf>

¹⁹ In the profiling questions, a total of 235 survey respondents participated. When asked if they had received a cash transfer, one respondent in Hargeysa said no. This respondent was dropped leaving the total number of the respondents that participated until the end as 234.

²⁰ Sex composition was not predetermined. Sampling is solely by role of the respondent in the project.

community distribution committees, local traders and the implementing partners (Nafis, Taakulo, Plan). A Key Informant Checklist (Annex 2: Final Data Collection Tools) was used to guide the interviews.

3.2.2.3 Focus group discussion (FGDs)

A total of 12 FGDs were held with heads of households that received the unconditional cash transfers, business grant recipients, community distribution committees and adolescent boys and girls drawn from the recipient households²¹ in Hargeysa and Burao as planned at the inception stage of this evaluation. In total therefore, 72 participants (49 females, 23 males) participated. No persons with disabilities were available to participate in the FGDs. Of the total FGD participants, 12 were adolescent girls and 11 adolescent boys. The participants were purposively selected from those that either directly benefitted from the cash transfers, their dependents or others that indirectly supported the project. Separate FGD Guides (Annex 2: Final Data Collection Tools) were developed to guide the discussions. Questions were open ended to facilitate in-depth discussions and gathering of diverse views. Each FGD took about 90 minutes. In most cases five (5) participants were involved in each FGD in compliance with the COVID-19 social distancing protocols, although in 4 cases, this number was 6-8 participants. Four facilitators (2 female) conducted the FGDs (3 per day for 2 days). Working in pairs, one moderated the discussions while the other wrote down the key consensus points. Each team spent the third day transcribing the FGD notes into Microsoft Word version.

3.2.2.4 Documentation of case studies

Documentation of case studies was linked to field verification of the recipient businesses that benefitted from the one-of cash grants. As part of the verification, the case studies were documented from the recipients. The stories captured the recipient's experiences with covid-19, how the pandemic impacted the welfare of their households and how the cash transfers changed their situation. See Annex 4: Case studies.

3.3 Enumerator training and pre-testing of the tools

A total of 10 data enumerators (5 female, 5 male) were engaged in the field data collection exercise. The enumerators were selected from the project locations. Gender balance was observed in appointing the enumerators. The enumerators had worked as data enumerators in similar assessments before. This ensured the evaluation benefitted from their clear understanding of data collection procedures. The enumerators were selected based on their academic qualification, relevant past experience and knowledge of English and Somali languages. They were required to have functional Smart Phones (Android) for electronic data collection.

Prior to the field data collection, a two days enumerators training and pre-testing of the tools was conducted in Hargeysa. In Burao, the training took one day since the tools had been pre-tested in Hargeysa. The training covered crucial aspects of the evaluation including but not limited to the purpose of the evaluation, research ethics, covid-19 protocols, interviewing skills including facilitation skills, Plan International Child Safeguarding Policy & Principles, electronic data collection using ODK Collect data kit; Rapport with the respondents, data collection methods and tools, data capture and recording of responses, data protection and security, data cleaning and submission to the Consultant/Research Supervisors and emphasis on data authenticity, completeness and confidentiality.

Following the training of the enumerators, the data collection tools were pre-tested to confirm the duration of application, test for common understanding of the questions, check if any

²¹ Adolescent girls and boys were not part of the household recipients but part of household members that benefitted from the cash transfers.

questions made the respondents uncomfortable, repetition of questions and logic of flow among others. Caution was exercised to ensure that the pilot testing was carried out in a non-targeted location/village to avoid data contamination. The sample for pre-testing was as follows;

Table 6: Pre-test sample

Interview category	Age category	Total respondents
Survey	7 adults (5 females, 2 males)	7
FGD	Adolescent boys	1FGD (5 participants)
	Female recipients	1 FGD (9 participants)
Total Sample		21 respondents

Minor amendments were recommended from the field pre-test exercise. These included merging of similar or closely related questions and further clarification of any unclear questions.

3.4 Data and data safety management

Debriefings were held virtually every evening between the Consultant, Research Supervisors and the enumerators to review progress achieved and challenges experienced each day. This enabled feedback from the enumerators and fixing any issues and challenges encountered in the previous day. A joint WhatsApp group was established for ease of coordination, real-time technical and logistical support and timely communication during field work. Issues that could not be resolved by the consultant were escalated to the designated team at Plan, Taakulo or Nafis. The enumerators submitted completed tools daily to the Consultant/Research Supervisor to avoid data loss.

The information gathered was not high-risk neither were the targeted research categories deemed high risk. Despite this, key strategic mitigation measures were put in place to ensure data safety at collection and transmission. For instance, personal details of the cash transfer recipients or their dependents were not documented to assure protection of their privacy. No pictures were taken from the recipients except those taken with the business owners who shared their case stories. This was only after their consent was sought. The information is deemed for Plan internal use only as a confirmation that the businesses supported still exist. Survey data was submitted to a central server after which it was not accessible to the enumerators. Controls were in place to ensure that once an enumerator submitted a survey, they could not access the file again. The consultant contract articles 4, 5, 6 and 11 provided safeguards for information and data gathered through this process. The consultant also emphasized these provisions during the numerators training. By the end of the field data collection exercise, no sensitive disclosures were made by the respondents including the adolescent girls and boys.

3.5 Data quality management

A thorough technical review of the tools was done by the relevant Plan staffs to ensure they captured all the data needs for the evaluation. Enumerators were trained to ensure a clear understanding of the questions and the data expected from the respondents. Field testing of the tools was done to practically orient the enumerators on the questions including on how to ask, probe and capture feedback. To ensure safety of all the data collected, the Research Supervisors accompanied the enumerators in the field. They provided oversight to the data collection exercise and retrieved all the completed tools each day to avoid data loss. They also did spot checks on the enumerators to ensure that interviews were being conducted properly and the right tools were used.

3.6 Data analysis and presentation

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were employed to analyze data gathered through the various methods. Specifically, data obtained from the quantitative survey responses was cleaned up, extracted using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and uploaded into excel programme for analysis. Analyzed data was summarized and presented in charts, tables and other descriptive statistics to illustrate the views on changes or lack thereof against the target expected outcome. Analysis of qualitative data was mainly through content analysis and establishment of themes. Themes and sub themes were as much as possible guided by the evaluation needs outlined in the terms of reference. Findings from the qualitative data were used to triangulate survey findings to inform final conclusions of the evaluation.

3.7 Safeguarding and ethics

Article 15 of the contract signed between Plan International Somalia/Somaliland country office and the consultant provided elaborate safeguards for children and young people. The consultant cascaded the provisions to the enumerators during the enumerator's trainings. A clause on safeguarding was also inserted in the enumerator's contracts. During the training, relevant protocols were agreed for reporting any incidences of safeguarding during field work. At a first instance, any team member that came across a safeguarding issue in Hargeysa would communicate it to the lead consultant through a local number that was provided to all enumerators. The lead consultant would then escalate the issue to the Plan Safeguarding Focal point. In Burao, the enumerators would report such an incidence to the designated Research Supervisor who would report it to the lead consultant. The lead consultant would then refer the case to the designated Plan Safeguarding Focal Point. No incidences of safeguarding were reported.

Informed consent clause was included in all the tools. Respondents were informed about the objective of the evaluation and how the information generated would be used. The voluntary participation principle was also elaborated to them. Whenever the respondents granted or declined the consent to participate, the relevant section in the tool was marked. All original tools were submitted to the consultant. All respondents consented to participate including the adolescent girls and boys.

3.8 Study limitations

Despite the programme having focused on three outcome areas that also included Outcome B: The affected population have access to information on the response and complaint mechanism and Outcome C: Increased public awareness on girls' education and on the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse that have heightened in during the crisis, the evaluation was limited to only Outcome A: Most vulnerable families in IDP camps supported to address their basic needs including food, water for drinking and cleaning and hygiene product A1.1.1. 592 Households (4518 individuals) benefit from multipurpose cash for their livelihood needs. According to the evaluation TOR, this was in consideration of the ongoing humanitarian crises in the region resulting from the protracted drought, and the need to avoid subjecting the already affected populations to extensive interviews.

Fewer male cash recipients participated in the survey. Men were mostly engaged in livelihoods activities away from home. In addition, fewer men were included as recipients. In Hargeysa, only women received a business grant. In Burao, women and men received the unconditional cash transfers. Only women received the business grant in Burao as well. To increase the number of male respondents in the evaluation, separate focus group discussions were held

with men and adolescent boys in every region. More male traders than females also participated in the interviews.

No persons with disabilities were available to participate in the FGDs. To ensure representation of their voice, the survey sample required that at least 10% of those sampled were PWDs. In this regard, at least 51 of the survey respondents were PWDs. These included 42 females and 9 males. Of the total number, 31 were drawn from Burao and 20 from Hargeysa.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Project overview

It was not the first time that the consortium members had implemented cash programming intervention in Somaliland. Previously, they were also involved in the distribution of nonfood items and awareness campaigns. Despite effectively delivering the cash response, the project partners reported that no cash-based programming guidelines were available at Plan to guide the intervention.

To identify the recipients of the cash transfers, the cluster level associations (CLAs) were used. These are groups comprising of the most vulnerable community members. The CLAs bring together self-help groups (SHGs) comprising of 20 members each. Each SHG was required to identify two most vulnerable households in an open and transparent manner. A predetermined criteria requiring the household to (fulfil most of the vulnerability criteria) among them to have suffered effects of covid-19 pandemic, have adolescent girls, households headed by women, household has a low income and no reliable source of income, has a pregnant or lactating mother, has children under 5yrs, has an elderly family member, has cases of child malnutrition under treatment and have a member living with disability; and that CLA members had consensus that the potential beneficiary was most deserving.

4.1 CHS1-Is the humanitarian response appropriate and relevant

The evaluation sought to establish how appropriate cash transfer was in meeting the immediate needs of the recipient families in the context of covid-19, and during the duration of the project. In establishing this, there was need to first establish how covid-19 affected the recipient households, and whether the cash transfer was appropriate in addressing the identified needs. In this regard therefore, a number of areas were assessed whose findings are reflected below.

4.1.1 Effects of covid-19 on the recipient households

Focus group discussions held with the cash transfer recipients in Burao and Hargeysa indicated that covid-19 triggered high inflation rate that led to increased food prices. The cost of fuel and transportation went up, jobs were lost following the nation-wide lockdown, and children were withdrawn from school and other institutions of learning. There was shortage of basic necessities including food, water and sanitation materials. Families were not able to pay for electricity bills. Businesses were shut down which disrupted household livelihoods. These impacted the socio-capital and socio-economic status of the affected households. Women suffered emotional stress due to the inability to feed their children. Girls and boys could not go to play freely. They experienced stress due to the restrictions to remain indoors without food, source of entertainment and other basic needs.

Responses from the community distribution committees (CDCs) indicated that many families disintegrated following socio-economic stress. Cases of malnutrition were reported among girls and boys, the elderly men and women and those living with disability. Some elderly people died due to starvation while others lived in fear and hopelessness as they were profiled as being among the most vulnerable to the covid-19 virus. Kinship ties were disrupted as the lockdown continued to restrict population movements.

The adolescent boys reported that covid-19 restricted them at home losing time for school and sports. They lacked access to health care services. The adolescent girl's views were similar to those of the boys. They also lacked sanitary pads and underwear, water and food. FGDs held with the grant recipients also reported that some adolescent girls were forced into child marriages in exchange for financial support. Some adolescent boys joined violent gangs. Many children went to live on the streets in the hope that they would get help from well-wishers.

4.1.2 Appropriateness of the cash transfers

The evaluation sought to establish therefore how appropriate cash transfer was in meeting the immediate needs of the recipient families in the context of covid-19; and how aligned it was with the ministry of health (MOH) containment measures of covid-19. Asked therefore how appropriate the approach was, the following responses were provided.

Table 7: How appropriate was cash transfer approach to the covid-19 context?

			Male	Female
	N=234	%	46	188
Very appropriate	231	99%	20%	80%
Somehow appropriate	3	1%	0%	100%

From the survey responses, most recipients 231(99%) found the cash transfers appropriate in meeting their immediate needs in the context of covid-19 outbreak. The survey findings were similar to those from the FGD participants. According to the adult male recipients of the unconditional cash transfer in Hargeysa, cash transfer was the most strategic intervention in that it helped to rapidly restore social functionality and emotional recovery of the most affected households. These views were similar to those of the community distribution committee and the community leaders in Burao, which indicated that cash transfers were the most appropriate approach in the context since it had immediate impact on the most vulnerable households. The leaders reported that the transfers were an immediate relief to the most affected households. They further explained that the approach was in line with the ministry of health containment measures and complemented the work of the covid-19 Task Force and community level response committees, since it reduced movements of the recipient members.

As the capacity of the caregivers was enhanced to meet the immediate needs of their children as well as sending them back to school, (both girls and boys below 10 years and adolescent girls and boys), this helped to improve their safeguards. These views were similar to those expressed by the project implementation partners-Nafis, Taakulo and Plan International Somalia/Somaliland. The partners observed that the cash grants enabled the most vulnerable families to purchase the vital basics, was the safest method in a context of fast spreading pandemic-which helped to observe the MOH protocols, as families didn't have to go out to look for work.

The project team went further to explain that the project was partially targeted at empowering the women recipients. In this regard, about 60% of the recipients were women. This gave them a chance to influence decision making at the household level. The cash transfers helped to stabilize the beneficiary families, especially the women headed households in the context of severe socio-economic strain. They also noted that the unconditional grant was flexible to spend, which gave more options to the households.

According to the adolescent boys in Burao, *"Before the cash assistance was provided, our situation was very hard surviving without basic needs but this changed as soon as our households received the first cash transfer"*. Female adults from Hargeysa observed that the cash grants helped to revive their businesses, which guaranteed them more sustainable support.

According to the director of planning and national development at MESAF, the intervention was appropriate in that it targeted the informal settlements where majority of the poor and internally displaced people lived, with most being women and children. It cushioned the most

vulnerable from further deterioration as a result of economic shock. This view was similar to that of the Director for IDPs at the National Disaster Relief Agency (NDRA), who noted that the most vulnerable people were the most affected hence it made sense to target them. The director further noted that most of the targeted recipients did not have a source of income and resorted to using negative coping methods such as selling of family assets, giving up their daughters for child marriage in exchange for financial support, sending children to beg on the streets (noted the number of children on the streets today has remained high since), and reducing the number of meals taken per day (specific data not available).

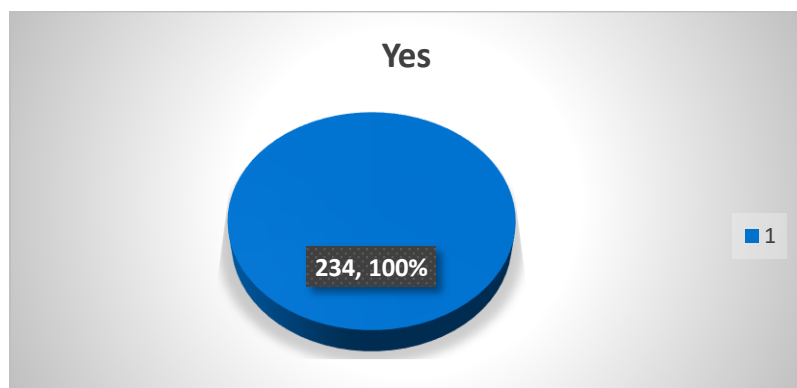
In terms of the cash transfer's appropriateness in responding to the gender and cultural dynamics, contradictory feedback was provided. In this regard, the FGD recipients (females and males) reported that no cultural sensitivities were experienced. They perceived women to have been the most appropriate family members to receive the grant. They argued that joint decisions were made with the male spouses to mitigate any possibility of spousal conflicts and misunderstanding. According to the male heads of households that received the unconditional transfers in Hargeysa, women are traditionally perceived to be more dependable than men on matters of financial custody and management. As a result, most men tolerated having their spouses receive the cash. The male FGD respondents were concerned that some men would most likely get tempted to divert the finances to non-essential expenses. They dispelled the rumor that having their spouses be the primary recipients would dilute their male supremacy in the family. The FGD participants viewed were corroborated by those of the project team. According to the project team, the self-help group (SHG) structures helped to neutralize the possibility of cultural reactions. Men and women who were members of the SHGs participated equally in the SHGs activities. Awareness raising on inclusion and participation of women had been ongoing in the past period.

Some contradictory views were expressed by 110(48%) of the survey respondents who reported some tensions related to the cash transfers in their homes (see details under CH3). Findings indicated that some men felt that it was against their culture having the woman as the cash recipient. They were concerned that they were not involved in making the decision about the choice of the recipient. As a result, some men avoided participating in the decisions on how the cash transfer was spent in their households. These contradictions may require further assessment.

4.1.3 Accessibility and functionality of the markets during the transfers

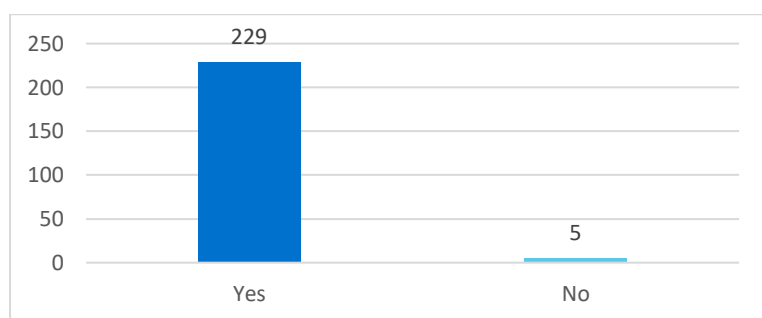
The evaluation sought to establish how appropriate the cash transfer approach was in light of market functionality in the context of covid-19. It also sought to establish if the markets were accessible in the context of the containment measures including the lockdown; and how appropriate then the cash transfers were in such context. The evaluation also sought to establish if food and other commodities were sufficient in the market and if then the cash transfers offered the best option in the circumstance. Responses to these are summarized in the chart below.

Figure 1: Markets accessibility



Asked if the markets were accessible, all 234(100%) of the recipients said yes. Asked then if food and other essential commodities were available in the markets, the following responses were received.

Figure 2: Were food and other commodities available in the local markets?



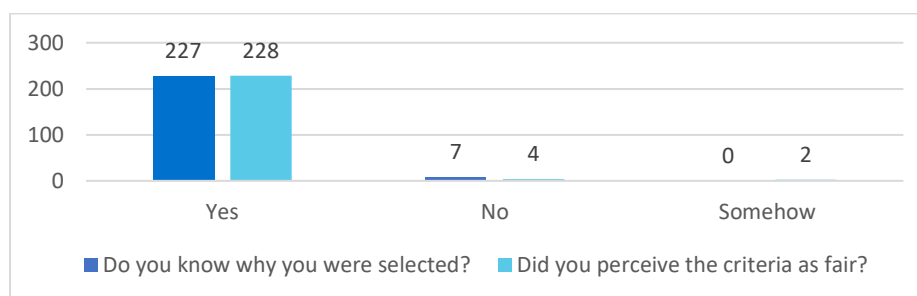
From the responses, 229(98%) said yes that food and other essential commodities were available in the local markets, with only 5(2%) being of a contrary opinion. For those that said no, most 4(80%) said that they travelled to the neighboring districts where there were larger markets to purchase food.

From the responses, the markets were functional, accessible and close to all recipient households. This therefore implied that the cash transfers were appropriate since it was not only possible to spend the cash grant, but also to find the commodities required by the households.

4.1.4 Recipient selection and fit with the objective of the cash transfers

The evaluation sought to establish the attributes of the cash transfer recipients and how that fitted with the objective of the cash grants. In this regard, an assessment was made on how the recipients were selected, if they were aware about the reasons that they were selected, and if yes what reasons they were selected; if they perceived the selection criteria as fair and if not, the reasons for that. Responses are summarized in the chart below.

Figure 3: Recipient's knowledge about the selection criteria and perception of its fairness



From the responses, 227(97%) of the recipients knew the reasons that they were selected to receive the cash transfers. Asked then what the reasons were, 211(93%) cited lack of income source, 55(24%) said they had children below 5yrs; another 6(3%) had a dependent living with disability, 4(2%) said they were selected by chance, 2(1%) because they were an elderly person and a similar proportion cited that their business had been affected by covid-19. Another one recipient said it's because they were a person living with disability.

Of the total respondents, 228(97%) perceived the selection criteria as fair with only 4(2%) reporting it was not fair and another 2(1%) reporting that it was somehow fair. The focus group discussion findings indicated that a vulnerability criterion was used in identifying the recipients and that the criteria was overly fair. The reasons cited for the criteria not being perceived to be fair included some people who were included did not meet the criteria while some families that met the criteria were left out. One respondent perceived the process as not being transparent, without giving the reasons.

In conclusion, most respondents found the cash transfers appropriate in meeting their immediate needs in the context of covid-19 outbreak. Mobile money transfers helped to minimize recipient movements hence enabling them to adhere to the MOH covid-19 containment measures. The cash grants had an immediate effect on the recipient household's food security and other immediate non-food basic necessities like water, sanitary pads for the adolescent girls and women, rent and payment of electricity bills. The approach was also appropriate since the local markets were functional and adequate food and other commodities were available. Access to and spending of the cash was also reported to have been safe. Most respondents found the amount given as adequate.

4.2 CH2-Is the humanitarian response effective and timely

The evaluation sought to establish if the cash assistance response achieved its objectives, the expected results/outcomes, including any variance in results across the recipients. In establishing the effectiveness therefore, a number of areas were assessed as follows.

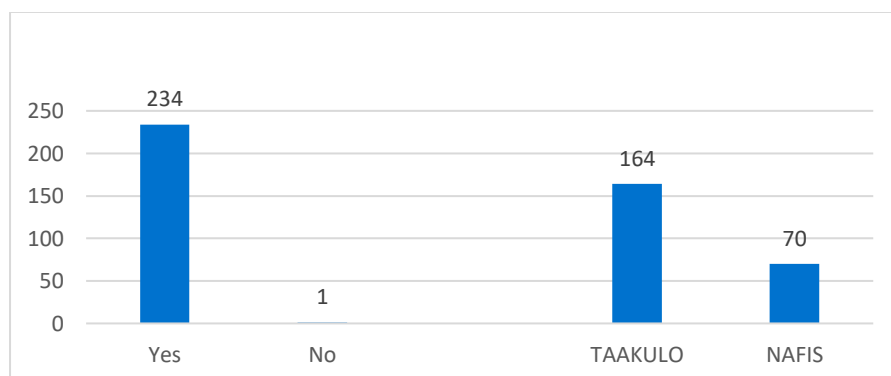
4.2.1 Planned versus achieved

Overall, the intervention targeted to reach 592 households with multi-purpose cash transfers. The total reach analysis shared by the implementing partners indicate that a total of 701 households were reached. These included 180 women recipients (10 being PWDs) reached by Nafis with USD500 conditional grant for reviving their businesses, of whom 90 were in Burao and 90 in Hargeysa. However, the first 30 recipients selected in Burao in October 2021 received USD493 (Nafis clarified that the discrepancy was due to the available funds at the time that could only cover that amount per recipient). The rest received USD500 each. The grants were distributed in three phases as resources became available during the project period. Another 521(about 60% women) recipients were reached by Takuulo with unconditional cash transfers. These included 138 people living with disability who comprised of 65 females and 73 males.

4.2.2 Reception of cash transfers/grants

The evaluation sought to establish if the respondents had received a cash transfer since the beginning of 2020, from whom, the number of times they received, the last time the transfer was received and the amount received. Asked therefore if they had received a cash transfer since the beginning of 2020, and from whom they received the transfer, the following feedback was provided.

Figure 4: Did the recipient receive cash transfer since 2020 and from whom



From the responses, 234 (100%) respondents had received a cash transfer since the beginning of 2020. Respondents reported to have received the transfers from either Taakulo accounting for 164(70%) of the responses or from NAFIS 70(30%). For those that received their transfer from Taakulo, 73% were female and 27% males, while those that received from Nafis, 99% were females and 1% males. The size of the monthly cash grant was based on the minimum household expenditure budget framework developed by the cash working group. By region, the responses are further summarized in the table below.

Table 8: Cash transfer recipients by region

			Male	Female	Hargeysa	Burao
	N=234	%	46	188	51	183
Total	234	234	20%	80%	22%	78%
Taakulo	164	70%	27%	73%	0%	100%
Nafis	70	30%	1%	99%	73%	27%

All the recipients (100%) that received a cash transfer from Taakulo were drawn from Burao and were all from the IDP community. Most recipients of Nafis transfers were drawn from Hargeysa (73%) and from Burao (27%).

In terms of the number of times the cash transfer was received, Nafis recipients reported having received the transfer once with those that received from Takuulo receiving multiple times. Asked therefore when they received the cash transfers last, most accounting for 214(91%) said in 2022. Others including 17(7%) received last in 2021, another 2(1%) in 2019 and one recipient in 2020. It is the evaluators view that the variation in the responses received on the last time the respondent received the transfers was dependent on if it was a one of business grant or the flexible cash transfers.

Asked if they received the amount that they expected, and the method of transfer used, the following responses were received.

Figure 5: Was the expected amount received and what method of cash transfer?



N=234

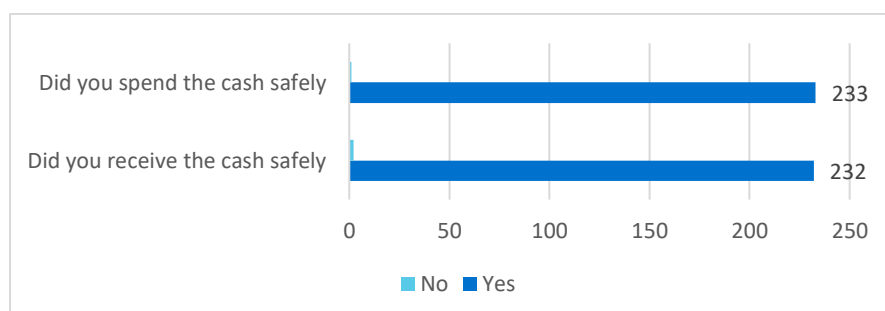
All the recipients 234(100%) received the full amount expected from Nafis or Takuulo. All 234(100%) received the cash through a mobile money transfer.

Findings from the project team indicated that no commission was charged on the transfers, rather full amounts were received as intended. This feedback is similar to that from the post distribution monitoring assessments that indicated no commission was charged on the transfers. Available documentation on the terms and conditions of the Zaad mobile money transfer indicated that indeed no commission is charged to the individual users of mobile money transfers.

4.2.3 Safety in receiving and spending the cash

The evaluation sought to establish if the recipients received and spent the cash grants safely, and if there were any safety concerns. Responses are summarized in the chart below.

Figure 6: Recipients' safety in receiving and spending the cash grants



From the responses, 232(99%) of the recipients reported having safely received the cash transfer. In this regard, no safeguarding issues were reported since the cash was delivered electronically into their mobile phones. 233(100%) of the recipients reported having spent the cash grant safely. For the recipient who reported not having safely spent the cash transfer, long distance to the market was cited. This posed the risk of contracting Covid19 from sharing transport, risk of physical or sexual attack and health risks walking a long distance. Despite these responses, the project had integrated adequate safeguards in the design. In this regard, mobile money transfers would safeguard the recipients from having to travel to different locations to collect the cash. The link with the local markets was also a safeguarding mitigation

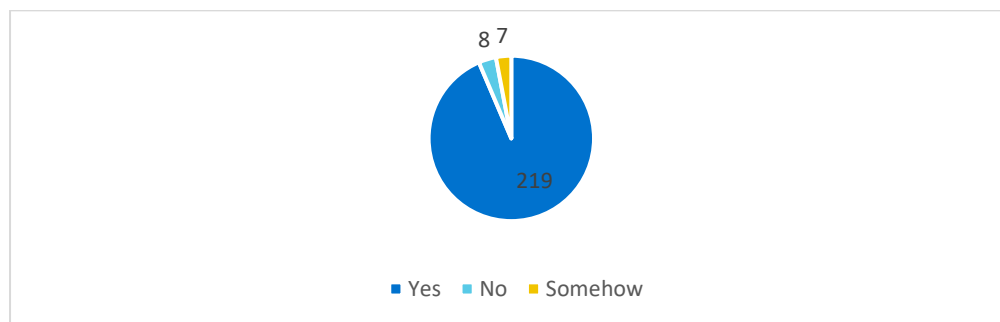
measure in that the recipients did not have to travel outside of their neighborhoods to purchase the required goods, unless they so desired.

From the focus group discussions however, no safety concerns were reported by the recipients in receiving or spending the cash grants. On the other hand, the adolescent girls and boys did not receive any cash grants, neither were they accountable in the spending. As such, these questions did not apply to them. However, as reported elsewhere in the report, they reported that during the period when their families received the cash grants, incidences of CEFM and violence including SGBV were low.

4.2.4 Sufficiency of the cash grants

Asked if the cash grant was sufficient to meet all the pressing basic needs of all the recipient household members, the following responses were given.

Figure 7: Was the cash grant sufficient?



From the responses, 219(94%) of the recipients said the cash grant was sufficient to meet the most pressing basic needs of their household. Only 8(3%) said the grant was not sufficient while another 7(3%) said it was somehow sufficient.

4.2.5 Sharing received cash with other households not reached

The survey respondents were asked if they shared the cash received with other households that did not benefit. From the responses, 169(72%) of the cash recipients reported to have shared the cash received with those that did not receive. This was effective in strengthening kinship ties with those that did not receive the grant.

4.2.6 How the cash grants were used

The recipients were asked how they spent the cash grant to meet the most pressing needs of the different members of their family. From the findings, most cash transfer recipients spent the cash to purchase food for all household members. These expenses cut across all the household members. This was appropriate in meeting the project objective of meeting immediate food needs of the most vulnerable households, in a context characterized by restricted movements and disrupted livelihoods. Food was followed by purchase of water. Education for children came in third followed by health care, clothes and shoes, soap, sanitary pads and underwear. Some recipients also spent the cash grant on payment of electricity bills with only a small number spending some money to pay rent. Despite this having been a covid-19 response project, only a small portion of the cash grant was spent on purchasing personal protective items including face masks, sanitizer and soap. This may be as a result of the recipients accessing PPEs from distributions supported by Plan and other organizations. Fewer recipients spent the cash grant on other pressing needs like purchasing of cooking fuel (charcoal, firewood, gas), purchase of livelihood inputs (seeds, fertilizer, pesticides), airtime, procurement of legal services, sharing with members of the extended family, repayment of debt, mobility items for the children and people living with disability, and procurement of

psychosocial support. Only a small proportion of the cash grants were reported to have been spent on business start-up with more men than women reporting.

4.2.7 Effects of the cash grants

According to the project team, the most affected households were consulted on their access to and knowledge in technology-based approaches of responding to crises. After understanding the target recipient's access to and familiarity with telecommunications, the project adapted mobile money transfer to deliver the cash, and therefore, effectively promoted the dignity and the safety of the target recipients. Findings from the FGDs with women recipients indicated that women were able to buy food, water, medicine, cosmetics, shoes and paid rent and electricity bills. Similarly, findings from FGDs with male recipients indicated that men were able to pay house rent, electricity bills and generally reduced economic stress. According to the business grant recipients, the cash grant helped to restore their small businesses that had subsided due to the inability to replenish the stock. This enabled them to restore their incomes and hence their livelihoods.

The elderly people and people living with disabilities met their nutritional needs, sanitation kits as well as medicine. This reduced their fear of death from starvation. Other recipients were able to engage a teacher for home schooling of their children during the lockdown, while others purchased internet bundles to facilitate online learning for the children. Cash grants also helped to improve the hygiene and sanitation of the recipient households. The cash grants were reported to cause attitude change amongst men. They became more cooperative with their spouses as choices had to be made on what was relevant to spend on. The fact that men were no longer controlling the cash, they had to cultivate an attitude of trust towards their spouses that the right choices would be jointly made.

The adolescent girls in Hargeysa reported that during the entire duration of the cash transfers, none of their siblings under the age of 18 years got married off or got engaged in child labour. They reported that following their families' ability to provide for the children, the children stayed at home hence avoided exposure to violence at the community level. Cash transfers enhanced the dignity of the adolescent girls through enabling them access to hygiene products. It averted protection risks by enhancing access to water where previously, girls collected water from distant locations, with increased risk of exposure to violence. According to the adolescent boys in Burao, in addition to meeting the immediate basic needs for their households, their caregivers spent some of the cash to start income generation activities including clothe shops, open air food shops, milk and tea shops etc. For those in Hargeysa, in addition to being able to buy basic needs like water, clothes, shoes for them (adolescent boys), their caregivers were able to buy meat for mixing with rice unlike before when they only afforded to eat plain white rice. In addition, to the adolescent boys, the cash transfers prevented them from being involved in harmful child labour, the risk of joining militia groups in the neighboring countries as a source of income. This further averted the risk of separation of young boys with their families in search of better life opportunities.

The project partners corroborated the above views by noting that the cash grants influenced the levels of CEFM as households were cushioned from economic stress. Intimate partner violence levels went down. The grants also facilitated taking children back to school. Schools were considered as safe places for children. The grants also prevented further selling of family assets by the most affected families as income inflow at the family level improved. Families had access to adequate quality diet that enabled them to participate in the awareness raising activities. There were reduced stress levels in families. Cash inflows helped to bring back normalcy and also reduced sibling rivalry, and restored dignity of the recipients. Overall, the cash transfers contributed to improved sanitation conditions as families were able to purchase water, soap and other necessary items for household use.

In conclusion therefore, it is the evaluator’s view that the cash transfer response fully fulfilled the expected project outcome - the most vulnerable IDP families supported to address their basic needs including food, water for drinking and cleaning and hygiene products. In this regard, the cash transfers effectively met the immediate needs of the most vulnerable families. Overall, it had an immediate effect on the livelihoods, sanitation, health, psychosocial well-being, education, protection and safeguarding needs of the beneficiary households. It also positively influenced the ability of the recipient households to adhere to the MOH containment protocols. It restrained the target households from using negative coping methods by enhancing their coping mechanisms, helped to restore the dignity of the target household members including the elderly and those living with special needs, who were living under eminent threat of starvation and death. Linked to this, the cash transfers resulted in improved access to and inclusion of the traditionally isolated community members including persons living with disability and the elderly. Further, the grants also helped to restore normalcy in the target households including among children. The grants were also reported to have influenced the levels of CEFM and SGBV as the caregivers were able to pay school fees for their children when the schools resumed.

4.3 CH3-Is humanitarian response strengthening local capacity & avoiding negative effects?

The evaluation sought to establish if the cash transfers contributed to strengthening of local capacities. In this regard, an assessment was made of how the response could have impacted on the intra household decision making abilities, the local markets, resilience and the capacity to cope post distribution period, and its impact on the environment among others. Findings are presented below.

4.3.1 Impact of the cash transfers on the intra-household decision making

The evaluation sought to establish how the recipient households arrived at the decision on how to spend the cash grant. In this regard, responses are summarized in the table below.

Table 9: Who made decision on how to spend the cash grant?

	N=234	% of total (N=234)
Total	234	234
Mother decided	210	90%
Father decided	69	29%
Father jointly with mother decided	38	16%
Jointly with family members living with disability on their needs	9	4%
Jointly with female members <10yrs	4	2%
Jointly with male family members <10yrs	2	1%

In most households, the mother 210(90%) decided on how the cash grant would be spent, or the father did so which accounted for 69(29%) of the responses. In other instances, the father jointly with the mother made the decision which accounted for 38(16%) of the total responses. In limited times, 9(4%) the decision was made jointly with family members living with disability, or jointly with female members <10yrs accounting for 4(2%) of the total responses, or jointly with male family members <10yrs, which accounted for 2(1%) of the total survey responses.

According to the community distribution committee in Burao, mother and daughters made the decision since they are in charge of all household work. A study conducted by Save the Children (2018) in Somaliland and Puntland on parenting without violence common approach, indicated that fathers were 90% of the times absent from home. This could have contributed to the great extent in which mother made unilateral decision on how to spend the cash grant.

In other cases, however, as reported by community distribution committee in Hargeysa, most households were headed by women hence women, to a large extent, unilaterally made the decision on how to spend the cash grant.

Contradictory views were expressed by the FGD participants who were also cash transfer recipients. According to the unconditional cash transfer recipients, they decided jointly as a family on how to spend the cash. Similarly, those that received conditional business grants reported that decisions were mutual and participatory. This, according to them, diffused any possibility of tensions between the spouses and other family members.

From the survey findings, it is the evaluator’s view that there was very limited consultation between the heads of households and the young people, and also those living with disabilities. For instance, only 9(4%) of the recipients reported that they jointly with PWDs made the decision on how to spend the cash. On the other hand, only 4(2%) and 2(1%) jointly made the decision with female members <10yrs or male members in the same age category respectively. To a great extent, the voices of children and young people may have been overlooked because the most critical needs like food, water, education and health cut across the family members attracting unilateral decision by the grant recipient or the head of household.

To some extent therefore, there was a discrepancy in the responses between the survey respondents and the FGD participants. As reported elsewhere in the report, one negative outcome of the cash transfers was men feeling left out as heads of households in the cash transfer recipients. This caused them to avoid participating in the household decisions on how the cash would be spent. This may explain this discrepancy but should constitute a key consideration in the design of future responses to ensure effective mitigation measures are proposed.

4.3.2 Effect/Impact of the cash transfer on the household

The evaluation sought to establish how the cash transfer impacted the household members. Responses are summarized in the table below.

Table 10: Impact of cash transfers on recipient households

	N=234	% of N=234
Afforded quality and adequate meals	207	88%
Girl continued attending school	98	42%
Boys continued attending school	82	35%
Family afforded PPEs to observe covid-19 protocols	22	9%
Stress levels were reduced	44	19%
Marriage of one or more of my children was prevented	2	1%
Marriage of one or more of my children was delayed	1	0%

From the survey responses, the MPCTs contributed to the realization of the project outcome one: Most vulnerable families in the IDP camps supported to address their basic needs including food, water for drinking and cleaning and hygiene product. In this regard, the cash transfers positively impacted the household food security. Through the cash grant, 88% of the recipient households reported to have afforded quality and adequate meals in the context of covid-19. This was followed by the ability of the recipient households to ensure their girl children continued attending school as reported by 98(42%) respondents. Similarly, 82(35%) of the grant recipients reported that they were able to retain their boy child in school at the time of the project. Having girls and boys in school was reported to have kept them away from protection and safeguarding violations. From the responses, another 44(19%) of the recipients reported reduced stress levels as a result of the cash relief. Still another 22(9%) of the

recipients reported that the family afforded PPEs hence they were able to observe the covid-19 protocols. These included face masks, sanitizer, soap and water.

While the survey findings perceived the impact of the cash transfers from an immediate food security and education needs, those from the FGD participants perceived the impact from a social protection and safeguarding lens. In this regard, FGD findings from the grants recipients indicated that to some extent, there was improved social protection at the household and community levels. This was because more households had their purchasing power improved, new businesses were started and this positively influenced protection concerns at the community level as violent tendencies and petty crime reduced. Women were able to participate in other productive roles at least after their most immediate needs were met. Responses from girls under 10 indicated that the general wellbeing of children below 10 years was good while boys under 10 said protection concerns among children below 10 years were relatively reduced. On the other hand, the adolescent girls reported that in addition to enabling their parents to meet the most pressing needs of their households, the cash transfers contributed to reduced violence at the household level. They accessed basic girl items including cosmetics. Findings from the community distribution committee in Hargeysa indicated that family security improved and tensions between spouses reduced. Men got emotionally freed as the household food security improved. Stress levels reduced. Unlike before the start of the cash transfers, during the transfer period, no cases of child labour were reported in the recipient's households. According to the CP and FGMC assessment report (Plan, 2020), in Hargeysa and Burao, the key informant interview responses suggested that about 10-50% of children were involved in one form of child labour or another in both locations.

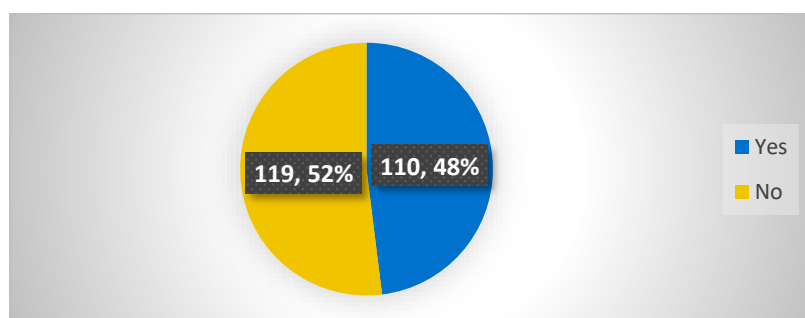
Views expressed by the community leader in Burao indicated that the cash transfers helped to improve the financial management skills of the recipient families. It helped to develop prioritization and negotiation skills amongst the family members. It also contributed to strengthening the resilience at the household level, particularly for the households that received conditional grants for business. Field verification conducted by the consultant (Hargeysa) and the Research Supervisor (Burao) during data collection confirmed that the businesses visited were still vibrant. Some recipients diversified their commodities while others expanded their stores. According to the Community Distribution Committee, cases of sexual exploitation of the adolescent girls resulting from incidences of sex for food reduced. On the other hand, physical violence among the adolescent boys reduced as they were sent back to school post the covid-19 lockdown.

Views from the project team indicated that from the support provided, women developed decision making skills and generally led to women empowerment through the cash grants. The grants also enabled to create opportunities for women and girls to attend trainings in life skills, positive parenting, child safeguarding and peer to peer sessions (for the adolescent girls), that were offered separately by the project. According to the Director for IDPs, cash transfers contributed to good nutrition, improved morality and skills in prioritization of needs.

4.3.3 Impact of cash grants on household stability and cohesion

Asked if there were tensions in their households related to the cash transfers, the following responses were received.

Figure 8: Impact of cash transfers on household stability and cohesion



Despite the FGD findings having earlier indicated that the cash transfers did not trigger any cultural sensitivities, and that most men were satisfied with their spouses being the cash transfer recipients, contradictory survey findings indicated that close to half 110(48%) of the survey respondents reported some tensions related to the cash transfers in their homes. The main cause of the tensions was women being the recipients of the cash transfer as reported by 108(98%) respondents. Competing priority demands came in second being mentioned by 32(29%) respondents, expenditure on unbudgeted items reported by 18(16%) respondents and needs surpassing the cash grant as reported by 8(7%) respondents. There is therefore need for further assessment of these contradictions in order to determine effective mitigation measures in future responses.

Some families were stigmatized and associated with covid-19. Some were assigned demeaning tags as 'Mrs covid-19' because they were assisted by the covid-19 project. Boys accessed play materials including football. This resulted in spending longer duration in outdoor games. This increased their risk of infection. Some adolescent girls and boys threatened to get married arguing that their caregivers had enough cash that would support them with the transition. This created tensions in the affected families. According to the community distribution committee FGD participants, traditionally, its women and girls that looked after the sick, the elderly and people living with disability (as part of unpaid labour). According to the FGD findings however, after women received the cash grants and revived their small businesses, this role was delegated to others or at least partially delivered.

4.3.4 Coping beyond the cash transfers

Asked how their households coped after end of the cash transfers, the female FGD participants who received a business grant reported that they continued to run their businesses. They also depended on the monthly savings accumulated from their business. Families learnt how disruptive covid-19 was and hence strengthened their social safety nets including kinship ties (for instance those that received the grants shared with others that were needy but not selected as recipients, as reported by 72% of the respondents). *"The project helped us to develop and nurture the we-feeling. This helped to strengthen family cooperation, participation and social support"*. Male FGD participants in Hargeysa.

According to the adolescent girls in Hargeysa, there is no risk so far faced since the end of the cash transfers. They linked this to the ongoing small businesses being run by their caregivers that are still able to help meet their basic needs. According to the project team however, the looming high inflation has a negative impact on the small businesses. It has led to high cost of electricity that has increased the cost of production hence the cost of business commodities. The recipients continue being active members of the community self-help groups that facilitate savings and credit for the members.

The team further noted that the lifesaving assistance was delivered when the crises was at its worst phase. It was continued through the phases when the aggressive containment measures

were eased and households managed to reintegrate to their normal lives. Although the cash assistance was intended to address primary needs according to the priorities of the recipients, households were allowed to make some savings out of the grants received to invest in income generation activities. Male adult FGD participants in Hargeysa observed that the ability to cope depended on personal and household resilience. Some families invested in small businesses which are likely to continue supporting them after the project ends. Those that did not do so may require continued cash transfer support.

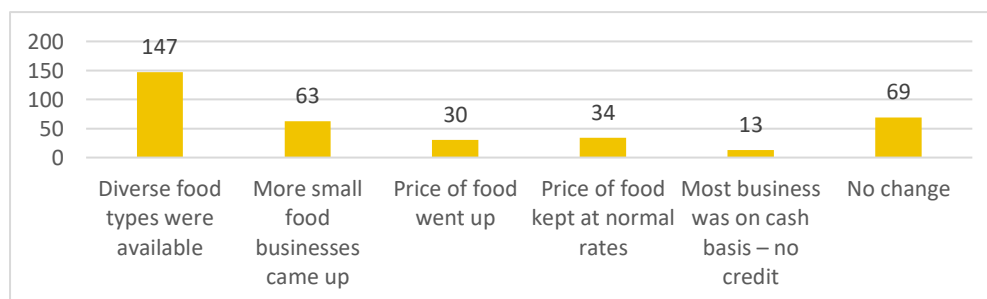
4.3.5 Effects of cash transfer on the local community

According to the key informant interview responses, on the wider community, to some extent, the cash grants promoted community cohesion and created new sources of income. Markets experienced a positive change as liquidity was guaranteed. The socio-economic status of the recipient community members improved. Security improved that also led to reduced violence against children in general. Income generation activities multiplied. The recipient households were able to continue making their savings contributions in the self-help groups, which kept the groups active during the project period.

4.3.6 Effects of the cash transfers on the local markets

Findings from the local traders indicated that they were aware about the cash transfers to the IDP households. Except one trader who learnt about the cash transfers from Takuulo, the others got information from the community members. According to the traders, the project team ought to have identified the traders and sensitized them on the upcoming cash transfers and the role they were expected to play. The evaluation therefore sought to establish how the cash transfers affected the local markets. Responses are summarized in the chart below.

Figure 9: Impact of the cash transfers on the local markets



N=234

From the responses, the most significant effect of the cash transfers on the markets was availability of diverse food types (rice, vegetables, sugar, milk, salt, pasta, oil, flour and sanitary pads etc) as reported by 147(63%) of the total respondents. This was followed by more small food businesses were started accounting for 63(27%) responses. Findings also indicated that the cash transfers did not affect the food prices, as 34(15%) respondents reported that normal food prices were maintained. Contrary views were expressed by 30(13%) survey respondents who reported that the price of food increased. Most transactions were in cash (not credit) as reported by 13(6%) respondents. Those that reported there being no change in the local markets accounted for 69(29%) of the survey respondents.

Views from the project team indicated that the project led to market stimulation. From the FGD findings, the number of economic transactions increased. Transportation business improved following the market vibrancy. The traders reported that there was increased purchasing power, traders received more customers than before, there was increase in the number of items purchased, and more traders started small businesses (some were those that received

business grants). Further, circulation of money improved and disposable income levels also increased.

According to the local traders, in order to respond to the increased demand, they increased stock of food and non-food items and diversified the commodities. They restocked vegetables daily or weekly and monthly for non-food items. Others extended their businesses. The traders went for the goods from downtown at the wholesalers and brought them closer to the recipients. This enhanced the security of the recipients and minimized movements that would otherwise expose them to the increased risk of covid-19 infections. Customers observed covid-19 protocols by wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing while at the shops.

On the down-side, as alluded to by 30(13%) of the survey respondents, the season was marked by high inflation rate that increased the commodity prices. This partially resulted from the covid-19 pandemic, the protracted drought and effects of the desert locusts that affected the region at the same time. To ensure sustained stock, in Burao, some traders had to depend on supplies given on credit.

4.3.7 Markets post cash distribution period

According to the local traders, food and non-food items are adequately available in the market. However, without cash transfers coming through any more, the purchasing power of the households has declined. Food prices are expected to increase as the global economic crisis continued impacting countries including Somaliland. The cost of petrol is gradually increasing and this is affecting the entire production value chain including the cost of transportation. Some of the businesses that had been established or revived using the cash grants have started to decline. The ongoing drought in the country has exerted further stress on the households.

4.3.8 Cash transfers impact on the environment

According to the traders in Hargeysa, increased market activities led to increased levels of garbage. The local government deployed garbage collection truck every two days. Traders paid \$1-\$2 for garbage collection. Households did not pay for garbage collection. They disposed of their garbage in the market where traders in return paid for the collection. Animals roaming in the markets seeking for food scattered the heaped-up garbage making the markets unsanitary. Findings also indicated that with the introduction of the cash grants, burning and sale of charcoal increased in the IDP camps as more charcoal businesses started. This had a negative effect on the environmental conservation.

In conclusion, the cash transfers contributed to skills building in decision making and prioritization at the household level. Most women were reported to lead in decision making, unilaterally especially in women headed households, or jointly with other family members. This is unlike before where cultural norms restricted women from participating in decision making. The cash transfers were also effective in stimulating the local markets as reported by the local traders. New businesses were started as a result of the increased purchasing power at the household level. The transfers also contributed in improving resilience at the household level as families were able to meet their immediate basic needs. Those that started or revived their businesses reported being more food secure. It is also noteworthy that the cash transfers resulted in some negative effects on the recipient households including creation of tensions. They were also reported to have resulted in increased garbage in the markets following increased business activity. Appropriate mitigation measures should be considered in future responses.

4.4 CH4-Is humanitarian response based on communication, participation, feedback?

The evaluation sought to establish if the response embraced effective communication approaches, stakeholders' participation in the design and implementation of the response, and if an effective feedback mechanism was in place and used.

4.4.1 Awareness about the cash transfer response

Most respondents were aware about the cash transfer response in the two regions. They were able to articulate who it targeted, the support that was provided and the organizations that were involved. The adolescent boys and girls for instance reported being aware about the cash grant/transfers that their families received from the project. They were also able to specify the items that their caregivers spent the cash on. The local leaders, community distribution committees, camp leaders and the traders were also aware about the intervention. Some like MESAF and the NDRA confirmed to have been consulted and informed about the intervention and the selection criteria. They were also able to articulate the strengths and the weaknesses of the response as discussed elsewhere in the report.

According to the project team, the government participated in the review of the proposed selection criteria (a view confirmed by MESAF and NDRA). Specifically, the Minister and the Director General of MESAF participated in one meeting each in which the selection criteria were discussed. The National Displacement and Refugee Agency (NDRA) in Hargeysa reported to have been consulted before the selection criteria was shared out by the project partners. NDRA also participated in the prioritization of the potential recipients. One critical gap identified by NDRA is absence of joint impact assessment of the intervention.

According to the FGD findings, the community distribution committee (CDC)²² was involved in the identification of the potential recipients guided by a set criterion. They identified the most vulnerable households for consideration. CDC was also involved in awareness raising activities. According to the community leaders in Burao, regular meetings and discussions were held with relevant stakeholders during the response. They gave their feedback through the existing community level structures.

In terms of recipient participation, according to the business grant recipients in Hargeysa, they did not play any additional role in the cash transfers except being recipients. Some were however involved in awareness raising events and health and education trainings. The adolescent girls and boys reported not having been involved in the cash transfers directly but in joint decision making in their households. They reported however that they were informed about the selection criteria and why their families were selected. They termed the criteria as fair. Recipients also provided feedback during regular field monitoring visits by the project team. On the other hand, the local traders reported to have participated in the response by ensuring the market remained active and diverse commodities were available.

Feedback obtained from the key stakeholders will inform the next project phase, in which the inflation rate will be a key consideration.

²² CDCs are community coordination structures whose membership comprise chairpersons of the cluster level associations (CLAs) and community management committees. Members are all females since CLAs draw from the self-help group approach is a women structure. Members of the CDC are aged 25-70 yrs and also include PWDs. CWDs were tasked with selection of the cash transfer recipients from the CLAs, registration of the selected recipients, conflict mitigation through community involvement and reporting feedback to NAFIS

4.5 CH5-Are complaints welcomed and addressed?

The evaluation sought to establish if a complaint mechanism was in place and if the project stakeholders especially the direct beneficiaries were aware about it. It also sought to establish if the recipients used the mechanism, and if so, if they felt safe using it. It also sought to establish if their complaints were acted upon as well as the turnaround time in doing so. The evaluation also assessed the appropriateness of the mechanism in the context of covid-19 pandemic.

Overall, findings indicated that a feedback mechanism existed (hot line and email) but it was not known to all relevant stakeholders particularly the recipients of the cash transfers. Despite this, at least community coordination structures existed through which the recipients were able to raise any concerns. The feedback mechanism was effective and reliable, at least as reported by those that had access to it. Feedback was provided in real-time.

Findings from the business grant recipients in Hargeysa indicated that the formal/official feedback mechanism was largely unknown to them. Most did not know how to communicate their feedback to the project. However according to the community distribution committee, recipients gave their feedback through informal/community-based feedback mechanisms like the community conversation meetings. The adolescent girls gave their feedback through the community distribution committee, the chairpersons of the community welfare committees, or the community leaders (a view also expressed by male FGD participants in Hargeysa). The adolescent boys gave their feedback through their caregivers. Once the feedback was received by the community-based mechanisms, they escalated it to the respective project teams. In this regard therefore, the recipients reported that their feedback was taken into consideration and acted upon.

According to the community distribution committee, the feedback provided to the project teams was acted upon. NAFIS used the feedback to initiate follow up and monitoring of the recipients. Feedback between the community distribution committee and Nafis was made possible by there being clarity of roles in the project, good coordination and clear contacts. The CDC felt safe using the feedback mechanism. They described the complaint mechanism as effective as it used telephone line (hotline) or email whose feedback was immediate. There was good cooperation between Nafis and the CDCs (Burao). Physical visits were discouraged as a mitigation measure to ensure covid-19 protocols were observed and also enhanced safeguarding. According to CDC, presence of a hotline meant that the stakeholders that had access to it and had a mobile phone could send their feedback to Nafis.

The recipients (women, men including those with disability) reported that they felt safe using the available feedback mechanisms. For instance, the adolescent girls and male FGD participants described the feedback mechanisms as appropriate in the context of covid-19. On the other hand, adolescent boys reported that they felt safe providing their feedback through their caregivers. No differences were reported for women, men, adolescent boys and girls as well as PWDs in terms of their ability to provide feedback through the available community-based feedback mechanisms.

According to the local traders, in Burao, they communicated with Taakulo on telephone. One of the traders in Hargeysa reported having not been informed about any feedback mechanism through which to seek for or provide feedback to the project team. The other alluded to the self-help groups present in the IDP camps through which feedback was offered or solicited. The adult male FGD participants in Burao reported that they were aware about the feedback mechanism and often contacted the project team. They reported that their feedback was well received and acted upon.

According to the project team, the proximity of Nafis office to the IDP camps facilitated easy communication and feedback from the recipients. Recipients were also provided with a telephone line through which to call Nafis if there was need. Views from Taakulo indicated that the complaints and feedback from the recipients and the host community were reviewed and recorded in the existing databases. In the second phase of the project, 87 calls were received by Taakulo to either give feedback or complain. Key issues included positive feedback like appreciation, request for information, request for assistance (months where cash assistance has been paused) or calls from non-recipients, major dissatisfaction – like perceived exclusion and inclusion errors.

In conclusion, the alternative community-based feedback mechanisms proved more effective in communicating and providing feedback to the project team. Findings indicated limited knowledge about the formal feedback mechanism – the telephone number that existed at Takuulo and Nafis. Despite this gap, the recipients reported having been able to provide their feedback. Deliberate effort should be made to communicate about the official feedback mechanisms to the recipients at the start of the project.

4.6 CH6-Is humanitarian response coordinated and complementary

The evaluation sought to establish if any coordination structures existed through which the response was coordinated, and how effective the coordination structures were. It also sought to establish if the response complemented or was complimented by other similar responses.

Findings from the project team and the government officers indicated that overall, the project coordinated well with the existing structures in Somaliland. Coordination meetings were organized by different agencies responsible for different coordination structures. At the district level for instance, the partners participated in the humanitarian clusters, child protection working group (convened by MESAF), GBV working group, self-help group cluster, cash working group (chaired by CARE Somalia), food security cluster (chaired by World Vision & co-chaired by the ministry of agriculture), and the multi sectoral coordination group (convened monthly by OCHA & NDRA). Even though the nutrition working group was part of the existing covid-19 coordination structures, the project did not directly coordinate with it since the project did not directly implement nutritional interventions. At the height of the pandemic, and in response to the containment measures, most coordination meetings were conducted virtually. Guidelines on the cash value were provided by the cash working group to determine the cash transfer amount. At the programme level, monthly partners update meetings were held with the DEC team whose agenda included providing updates, challenges, changes realized and successes.

The coordination structures helped to harmonize and disseminate messages and other relevant communication. They also increased the effectiveness of the community structures. They were effective platforms in which contextual analyses was shared, monthly updates were provided, work plans were shared, successes were disseminated, feedback obtained and guidance was provided on how to fill the 4W/5W matrix that was due to MESAF on monthly basis.

At the community level, findings indicated that the community leaders coordinated with the recipients through the existing community structures. These included the self-help groups, community distribution committees and the community welfare committees.

According to the project team, the response was informed by government priorities and hotspot areas identified by the government and other humanitarian coordination agencies. Line ministries were engaged during the proposal development and contributed to the general definition of needs in terms of the target households. After consulting with the target communities, selection criteria and other key project information was presented to MESAF

and NDRA. More importantly, MESAF and NDRA participated in the engagement and verifications processes.

According to the project team, the coordination structures provided them with a platform to consistently share updates about the intervention and report back on new cases needing support. Coordination structures were a source of technical support and updates about who was doing what and where. Coordination mechanisms promoted complementarity.

In this regard therefore, the intervention was very complementary to the government emergency response efforts. It directly contributed towards achievement of the MOH protocols for covid-19 containment. Mobile money transfer approach avoided community gathering/contact and enhanced movement restrictions. Personal protective equipment (PPEs) were provided to the stakeholders whenever a coordination event was convened. Similarly, PPEs were provided to the beneficiaries whenever physical meetings were necessary. The intervention adopted mobile cash transfers to ensure adherence to the MOH protocols by reducing movements and avoiding physical contacts.

4.7 CH7-Humanitarian actors continuously learning and improving

The evaluation sought to establish if any lessons were learnt and if so, how the lessons were used to improve the response.

4.7.1 Lessons learnt

Some lessons were learnt by the project stakeholders. These included;

1. The project team learnt that by engaging the community distribution committees and the self-help groups in identifying and selecting the cash transfer recipients, it helped to ensure transparency. This helped to integrate the do no harm criteria in the response in that it pre-empted any potential conflicts that could arise from picking some households and leaving out others.
2. In addition, the project team learnt that COVID-19 had brought new ways of working that often were more effective and efficient compared to the traditional ways of working. For instance, physical meetings led to loss of time through travels between meeting venues and workplace. In contrast, COVID-19 crises led to exploration of technology supported virtual meetings and ways of working. It enabled working remotely with diverse teams. It led to improvement in knowledge and skills in technology-based working environment.
3. The community leaders learnt that good collaboration was a result of sustained guidance, clear directions and adaptation of strategy. Through clear guidance on the application of the selection criteria to identify potential recipients and on how to engage with and coordinate community level structures, the community leaders were able to provide a conduit through which to coordinate feedback between the cash recipients and the project teams.
4. To the IDP camp leaders, cash transfers were the most appropriate/safe and effective approach in the context of covid-19. The approach enabled observance of covid-19 protocols.
5. To the government officials, government participation in decision making and in the design of projects lead to successful collaborations with the non-state actors. However, lack of sustainability strategy and a clear exit plan may lead to programme failure upon project end. This explain why some beneficiaries may require more help soon after the cash transfers were concluded - effective government engagement strategy was lacking. The government didn't understand its role before and after end of the project. The design failed to clarify how the government would sustain the results after the intervention ended.
6. Community level structures provide effective alternative communication and feedback mechanisms in a context of limited technology aided communication.

4.7.2 How the lessons learnt have been utilized by partners & the government

According to the partners, the lessons were used in;

1. Linked to lesson #1: Effective selection of the beneficiaries through cross-checking with the clusters and NDRA to avoid duplication in targeting.
2. Linked to lesson #2: Improved coordination, enhanced capacities and skills in technology assisted work environments and attending coordination meetings virtually.
3. Linked to lesson #3-5, Lessons will inform design of new projects in the future (Plan reported having already designed and applied for an intervention on education in emergencies).
4. Linked to lesson #6: Guiding adaptability of interventions and strategies. For instance, in the absence of the hotline among the recipients through which to report concerns to the project team, working directly with the community structures was explored and adopted.

According to the director of planning and national development at MESAF, the government has undertaken quite a number of actions as follows;

1. Linked to lesson #5: In the week that preceded data collection, the department of planning had a session with Nafis to discuss the possibility of reviving the women economic forum. In this regard, the department is considering to start supporting about 100 women annually in the informal economic zone with business grants. Linkages are to be established with development partners to sustain it. In the month of August 2022, MESAF supported 50 women to strengthen their businesses with an amount \$500. There is therefore need for harmonization with similar interventions. Discussions are ongoing.
2. Linked to lesson #5: The department of planning has had discussions with development partners to update the National Gender Policy. Further discussions are also ongoing.

4.8 CH8-Are staffs supported to do their job effectively, treated fairly & equitably?

The evaluation sought to establish if the project team possessed relevant and adequate cash programming skills, knowledge and expertise to deliver the response; and if equity was observed in the way the programme treated its staffs.

Plan International Somalia/Somaliland country office was the lead agency in the response. The team comprised of a Programme Manager (role shared by other projects), Procurement and Logistics Coordinator and Finance Manager. According to the country office, there lacked a full-time dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and a full time DEC Programme Coordinator. To fill this gap, Plan leveraged the M&E capacity at the partner's level. The Plan UK team provided technical support to the country programme team. It participated and provided guidance during the project kick-off meeting, reviewed progress reports, reviewed data collection tools for the post distribution monitoring, participated in monthly update meetings with the programme team and managed donor relations for the programme among others.

At Nafis, the team comprised of a Programme Manager, Project Officer, M&E officer, Finance Officer and Finance Manager. Takuulo team included a project officer, finance officer, accountability officer (MEAL), admin and logistics officer and enumerators that participated in the PDMs.

According to the Nafis Network, the Nafis team that was entrusted with the cash transfer component of the DEC programme had been trained in cash programming in the past. No refreshers were done during the project lifespan. According to the partner, in future, refresher

trainings would help to strengthen the cash programming skills of the team. However, the DEC programme offered trainings in other areas including in child protection, safeguarding and in complaint mechanism. Similar trainings were offered to the team by Plan UK. The trainings were relevant in ensuring that the team upheld safeguarding requirements and were able to guide the project stakeholders in observing the same. At Takuulo, staff attended relevant trainings including risk communication and engagement. They were also trained in covid-19 prevention and management including the MOH containment measures, and safeguarding. Concerning the adequacy of staffs assigned to the cash transfer intervention, Takuulo reported that the number was sufficient to deliver the intervention.

4.9 CH9-Are resources managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose?

The evaluation sought to establish how efficiently the resources were deployed and utilized, cost saving measures deployed, wastage prevented, fraud mitigated and accountability to the affected populations ensured.

4.9.1 Efficiency of the transfers

The evaluation sought to establish if the payments were made on time as informed by the distribution team. Findings indicated that 233(100%) of the recipients received their transfers on time. Feedback from the project team indicated that in terms of efficiency, the cash transfers were very timely, efficient (no commissions were charged on the recipients including when expending the money received). The mobile money company took responsibility for accuracy of the recipient details including the mobile numbers. No cases of wrong transfers were reported, nor were any incidences of fraud. The entire process was transparent. A one-time commission of about 1% of the transferred amount was charged by the mobile money company for the 3 main transfers made towards the business grants. The project covered the commission. No liability in commission was transferred to the recipients. Prequalification for the mobile money company to facilitate the transfers was done.

4.9.2 Partnership and collaborations

The evaluation sought to establish what partnership challenges were experienced during the 18 months in relation to the project budget disbursements, reporting, accountability, communication, capacity and skills, and budget management.

According to the finance office at Plan International Somaliland, the implementing partners were very reliable. Reports were timely, the quality of reports was good, accountability was good, capacity/skills were adequate (Cash Voucher Officer at Taakulo was in place). The communication was two ways and amiable. Monthly update meetings were held. These views were similar to those expressed by Nafis and Takuulo, who reported that the partnership was cordial. Nafis and Plan currently have an ongoing project (Child Protection and FGM Project) in Burao and Hargeysa.

Asked how the partnership with the local partner can be improved in the next project phase, the finance officer noted that Plan has the highest commitment to the Somalia localization agenda – 75% of its programmes are implemented by local partners. Partnerships are based on mutual communication and respect, something that Plan look forward to maintaining in the future partnerships. Partners led in the project proposals generation. They have the physical presence in the project locations hence they have a good context appreciation. Accountability to the affected populations (AAP) training was delivered and regular technical support was provided.

4.10 Current needs of the IDP households

The evaluation sought to identify the most pressing needs of the recipient households post cash grants distribution. From the responses, food was identified as among most pressing need for all household members in the two regions. Others included water, education for

children, health care and soap, sanitary pads, underwear and protection needs. Findings indicated that preferential treatment was likely to happen for boys over girls to attend school when resources were limited. On the other hand, mobility items were identified as a pressing need for elderly men and PWDs. Lack of mobility items like wheelchairs limited the ability of the people living with disability from accessing distribution points and or markets. Men identified house rent as a current pressing need. According to the adolescent girls FGD in Hargeysa, the most affected people include adolescent girls living with disabilities and young mothers. They also identified physical violence as a concern. According to MESAF, many children are living and working on the streets. Support for mobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration is recommended.

Concerning the elderly people, a one-year intervention was implemented in which each elderly person was given \$20 per month. Many elderly people don't have a family to feed them. Concerning people with disability, the 1st ever bill of PwD has been drafted and presented in parliament awaiting approval. MESAF has also launched sign language course. 60 sign language interpreters are currently being trained. MESAF also launched in the six regions of Somaliland a Disability Fellowship Ambassadors programme. The government is currently developing the new country integrated development plan (CIDP). Three (3) pillars in the CIDP include gender equality, women empowerment and social protection and elderly people and family. In terms of emergency responses, cash transfers are ongoing with support of many civil society organizations; drought response by CARE Somalia and an elderly people programme funded by the European Union. Unaccompanied and separated children and working girls are the most at risk. Also, women and men are most vulnerable especially when economic stress set in without any resources to support them. When spouses are unable to provide basic needs, it often results in intimate partner violence.

4.10.1 Appropriate method of addressing the needs

The evaluation sought to identify the most appropriate method for responding to the most pressing current needs. It asked respondents to propose the most appropriate methods to address the identified needs. In this regard, the most preferred approaches include food vouchers, direct multipurpose cash assistance, livelihoods support, support for services including education and health and seed vouchers. In addition to these approaches, the FGD responses suggested the need to increase the beneficiaries of cash transfers and provide extra support to the people living with disability. According to the adolescent girls, the project should support education of the adolescent girls living with disabilities to sustainably change their lives. Adolescent boys in Hargeysa recommended awareness raising to mitigate the risk of CEFM and physical violence against children. Caregivers and children should be equipped with positive parenting skills.

4.10.2 Current interventions

There is ongoing drought response in the region as well as conflict management in the eastern districts of Sool and Sanaag. The government sent an appeal to all stakeholders to support the ongoing drought response. Activation of relevant clusters to respond is underway. The government is providing land for the IDPs resettlement. Moving forward, Plan International Somalia/Somaliland would prefer retaining the same project partners but also bring on board Kindernothilfe. According to Nafis Network, Plan International Somalia/Somaliland has been a cordial partner since its establishment in the region. The two organizations are currently implementing a project funded by Plan Australia titled Child Protection and FGM Project in Somaliland. Takuulo is also looking forward to implementing more joint emergency projects with Plan in the future. Resources available include national organizations with good rapport with the local communities, interested government agencies, competent staffs in all partner organizations.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

CHS1 – Is humanitarian response appropriate and relevant?

The intervention was rated as successful owing to diverse factors. The partners creatively used a conflict sensitive approach that embraced community driven guidance to lay the strongest basis upon which to implement a sensitive intervention like cash transfers. The option to use the cluster level associations (CLAs) and the self-help groups helped to mitigate any potential conflict that would have arisen from the identification and selection of the beneficiaries. This was a true reflection of the Do No Harm principles in programming in humanitarian context. Furthermore, it also contributed to the accountability to the affected populations (AAP) in that the selection followed a consultative approach that ensured consensus was built around the final list of the potential recipients.

Linked to the AAP principles was the multi-level verification approach conducted by MESAF and the NDRA officials. A thorough scrutiny of the list proposed by the CLAs helped to ensure that those selected did not receive double transfer from other agencies at that particular time. Double targeting was thus avoided. This was possible because NDRA has a database of all cash transfer beneficiaries in Somaliland, courtesy of the cash consortium. This was confirmed by the study findings in which 234(100%) survey respondents confirmed to have received a cash transfer since 2020, and that the only source cited was Takkulo (70%) or Nafis (30%).

The cash transfer intervention was appropriate in the covid-19 context in several ways. It used mobile money transfer that ensured that the recipients did not attend distribution points risking covid-19 infections. The approach provided immediate relief to the most vulnerable households by enabling them to meet their most immediate basic needs hence recovering their dignity and stopped using negative coping methods. The approach was also appropriate in that it was flexible (unconditional grants). This enabled the households to spend the grant on what was priority to them. In addition, the business grants not only brought immediate relief from socio-economic stress but offered an opportunity to empower women (180 women) to sustainably provide for their households. Most of the businesses established were reported to still be operational at the time of this data collection. The intervention was appropriate in that it targeted the informal settlements where majority of the poor and internally displaced people lived, with most being women and children. It cushioned the most vulnerable from further deterioration as a result of economic shock.

The cash transfers were also appropriate relative to the access to markets and availability of food and non-food commodities required by the recipients. Findings indicated that the markets were functional and diverse food and nonfood commodities were available.

The key stakeholders to this project were relatively aware about the intervention. All those interviewed confirmed to have been aware about the cash transfer assistance. Some participated as direct recipients while others participated at different stages of the intervention. This helped to get informed feedback about the performance of the project at the evaluation stage.

CHS 2 – Is humanitarian response effective and timely?

The intervention was effective in meeting the project expected Outcome A: Most vulnerable families in IDP camps supported to address their basic needs including food, water for drinking and cleaning and hygiene products. 592 Households (4, 518 individuals) benefited from multipurpose cash for their livelihood needs. In this regard, Nafis reached 180 women recipients with USD500 conditional grant for reviving their business, while Taakulo reached

521 beneficiaries with unconditional cash transfers. Cumulatively, this was a total reach of 701 recipients.

Cash transfers were effective in delivering the immediate relief to the most affected populations. The affected households were able to meet their livelihoods needs, education for their children, health, psychosocial services and family cohesion. The elderly stopped worrying about death from starvation and infections, as families afforded to purchase food, sanitary products and PPEs. The grants therefore affected other sectors by strengthening the recipient's ability to seek for services beyond livelihoods.

By providing immediate relief on the livelihood stress at the target households, anecdotal evidence suggests that the cash transfer helped to influence downwards the levels of spousal conflicts, sibling rivalry, CEFM cases were reported to decline, SGBV and other forms of violence against children at the household and at the community levels.

Some negative outcomes of the cash transfers were reported. In some cases, absence of shared decisions on the cash expenditures led to tensions at the household level. Stigmatization of the recipients and labelling them as 'Mrs. Covid-19', as well as adolescent boys and girls associating the income with a 'facilitation' for child marriage, were all unexpected negative outcomes. Community education about cash programming should possibly help to address these gaps and others outlined in the report.

CHS3-Is humanitarian response strengthening local capacity and avoiding negative effects?

Findings indicated that the cash transfers contributed to strengthening the local capacities. In this regard for instance, the cash transfer approach improved the intra-household decision making by promoting joint decision-making at the household level. Women, who were the majority recipients mainly made decisions jointly with spouses and in some cases with other family members, even though in some occasions, the women made unilateral decisions on spending the cash grant. Findings indicated that men, despite the patriarchal nature of the Somali community, had to cultivate an attitude of trust towards their wives that the right choices would be jointly made. Joint decision making averted the possibility of spousal conflicts in most households.

The cash transfers also stimulated the local markets. More traders started operating. Businesses expanded. Diverse commodities were available. Food prices remained significantly unchanged (no figures were provided to ascertain this), and the purchasing power of the recipient households increased etc.

The cash transfers contributed to self-sustaining approaches particularly for those that started small businesses or revived those that had fallen. The respondents cited being able to continue sustaining their livelihoods from income generated from the small businesses hence have been able to move on post the cash transfer distributions.

CHS4-Is humanitarian response based on communication, participation, feedback?

To some extent, the response was based on communication, participation and feedback. Key stakeholders like the relevant government line ministries (NDRA and MESAF) confirmed to have participated in the review of the selection criteria as well as in the verification of the final cash recipients. They provided their feedback directly to the project team in this regard. On the other hand, they were not involved in the initial development of the selection criteria. They also provided the community level feedback structures through which the cash recipients communicated their issues to the project team.

CHS5-Are complaints welcomed and addressed?

It is the evaluators conclusion that the complaints mechanism existed (hot line and email) but it was not known to all relevant stakeholders particularly the recipients of the cash transfers. Despite this, at least the community coordination structures existed through which the recipients were able to raise any concerns. Regardless of if the stakeholders/recipients used the formal or the informal feedback mechanisms, findings indicated that the feedback mechanism was effective and reliable, at least as reported by those that had access to it. Issues of concern raised to the project team were acted upon. The limited awareness among the cash recipients about the existing formal mechanisms should be addressed in future interventions.

CHS6-Is humanitarian response coordinated and complementary?

The response was well coordinated. It also coordinated well with other relevant structures in the project locations. Similarly, the response complemented other similar responses particularly those initiated by the government and other NGOs to ensure the covid-19 pandemic was slowed down and eventually overcome. The approach adopted to provide cash transfers than physical distributions particularly complemented the government efforts to ensure the MOH containment measures were observed.

CHS7-Humanitarian actors continuously learning and improving

Findings indicated that valuable lessons were learnt by the intervention stakeholders. Of great emphasis was the observance of the conflict sensitivity and the do no harm principles exercised particularly at the beneficiary selection stage. These approach, that was community driven, and further verified by the government, helped to mitigate the risk of tensions and conflicts at the community level. New ways of working that were technologically aided were hailed as good lessons as effective coordination was reported to have taken place virtually.

CHS8-Are staffs supported to do their job effectively, treated fairly & equitably?

From the findings, despite two positions remaining unfilled at Plan level (full time project M&E officer and Project Coordinator), Plan team used the available human resources to effectively coordinate with the partners to deliver a successful response. Teams from the three partners reported to have been earlier trained in cash programming even though no refreshers were provided during the project period. Such refreshers would have helped to strengthen the team further. The teams also reported having received adequate technical support from the Plan UK team, which helped to improve the quality of the response.

CHS 9 – Are resources managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose?

Cash transfers were efficiently implemented as confirmed by the recipients and the project team. They were timely hence the households were able to meet their immediate needs without delays. They were also cost effective in that the mobile money transfer company did not charge any commission to transfer the money safe for the small commission charged on the main client – Plan International Somalia/Somaliland. No cases of wastage or fraud were reported hence the reliability of the mobile money transfer system.

There is a close similarity in the most pressing needs that the response targeted to address through the cash transfers, and the most pressing current needs. Food is the most pressing current need cited by all household members in the two regions. This is followed by water, education for children, health care and soap. Sanitary pads and underwear were also cited by a significant number of household members.

5.2 Recommendations

	Key findings	Recommendations
1	The community approach used in the beneficiary selection proved very effective and embraced the do no harm principles by ensuring all was done transparently hence any potential conflicts were pre-empted.	It is recommended to continue implementing this approach in the future interventions with some adjustments-to involve more divers self-help groups during the development of the selection criteria. This will ensure it is exhaustive of the various vulnerabilities at the community level at the time.
2	Key stakeholders like the relevant government line ministries (NDRA and MESAF) confirmed to have participated in the review of the selection criteria as well as in the verification of the final cash recipients. They provided their feedback directly to the project team in this regard. On the other hand, they were not involved in the initial development of the selection criteria.	It is recommended that Plan International and other actors should continue to involve the government stakeholders in beneficiary selection. This should be embraced as a good practice. It should also be integrated as a requirement in any frameworks developed to guide selection and targeting of cash grants beneficiaries. One further step to take would be exploring different ways to strengthen the involvement of the government stakeholders at an earlier stage.
3	Although this finding is not directly associated with the project itself, it is worth highlighting that some recipients reported incidences of stigmatization for having received support from the project. Some were labeled 'Mrs. covid-19'	It's recommended that the project should continue supporting community education on the concept of cash programming to mitigate potential stigma associated with responses like Covid-19. Relevant messages should be integrated in the other awareness campaigns on the same or different agendas. It is also recommended that further risk assessments to be conducted in order to mitigate any harm.
4	The recipients who received business grant reported that their businesses were still operational at the time of the evaluation. This will sustain them beyond the project period by providing more sustainable source of livelihood. Further linked to the flexible cash transfers, local traders reported that with the cessation of the cash transfers, businesses had started to decline as purchasing power had reduced and fewer items were purchased per customer.	It's recommended that the programmes continue to integrate business grants in the future emergency responses as they hold a promise to sustainable household livelihoods. Longer term measures would ensure market stability than when seasonal cash transfers are given. The pyramid should be inverted to have more beneficiaries receive conditional business grants than flexible cash transfers. This will ensure more recipients transition to sustainable livelihoods post emergencies. It is recommended that Plan International adopts a cohort system to graduate those fully established and stable households to create space for new intake.
5	One key recommendation of NDRA was planning a joint impact assessment involving the	As recommended by NDRA inclusion of, and allocation of resources for joint impact assessment in future responses should be considered. This should also include periodical joint monitoring

	government line ministries and other key stakeholders.	activities to ensure the government appraises the progress of the response, and that the response benefits from government feedback.
6	The protracted nature of emergencies in Somaliland including drought, cyclones, flood, desert locusts, clan conflicts and now covid-19 requires that budgeting takes into account the fluidity and fluctuation of the foreign currency (USD), which is the alternative currency used in local purchases and other transactions in Somaliland. High inflation was reported to have significantly influenced the cost of food and non-food commodities and negatively affected the stability of the small businesses supported through the conditional cash grants.	It is recommended that the future cash transfer responses consider inflation in the food basket determination. The food basket size should also be based on the household size.
7	Although findings confirmed that the feedback mechanism existed (hot line and email) it was reported that they were not known to all relevant stakeholders particularly the recipients of the conditional cash grants.	It is recommended that at the intervention design stage, it's important to consult with the affected populations to clarify the feedback mechanisms through which they would prefer to give and receive feedback. If other structures such as the community-based coordination committees are preferable, this should be clarified at that stage to ensure all recipients had similar information from the beginning. A hotline should be installed and communicated to all the beneficiaries from the beginning to ensure they can get rapid support whenever it's needed. This will ensure effective communication and feedback between the recipients and the project team.
8	Results of the past assessments linked the increasing cases of violence against children including SGBV and marginalization of PWDs to the effects of protracted emergencies including drought and effects of covid-19 pandemic.	It's recommended that Plan International should continue ensuring that cash-based programmes integrate protection, GBV and inclusion topics targeting particularly the recipients. Also, to include topics on positive parenting sessions particularly to raise awareness on child/youth rights (right to participate) as well as enhance communication skills for caregivers of PWDs. In addition, clear mitigation measures against risks associated with protection and SGBV should continue to be integrated in the design, implementation and reporting of future cash interventions. In this regard, PDM questions should include questions to monitor women and girls and

		other vulnerable group's participation, access to and safety of coordination, communication and feedback mechanisms. Protection specialists should be attached to cash programmes to ensure all safeguarding issues are well documented and acted upon.
9	Findings showed that the only gap in terms of coordination was with the nutrition working group.	It's recommended that future cash programmes should also coordinate with the nutrition working group to facilitate referrals of cases relevant to the working group.
10	The covid-19 response coordination structures provided a strategic platform for learning what other actors were doing, as well as communicating progress and successes	It's recommended that continuation of active participation in the existing community and national level coordination structures in future responses as well.
11	Most pressing current needs were similar to those that the intervention had been addressing.	It's recommended that despite the similarity in the current most pressing needs to those that the intervention addressed, it might be good to explore other alternative forms of cash programming to respond to the needs. For instance, more sustainable approaches like giving conditional business grants accompanied by skills training and close technical supervision and monitoring might deliver more sustainable livelihoods options than flexible unconditional cash transfers. Seed vouchers for those that can practice agriculture may also be a more sustainable option. These approaches may also be accompanied with mobilizing and encouraging women, men and youths to either form or join the existing community-based savings and credit schemes to enable them to build household savings. This would enable them to secure family livelihoods.
12	MESAF reported that it is contemplating reviving the women economic forum through which sustainable livelihood support initiative is being negotiated.	It's recommended that Plan International follows up with MESAF to establish how the future interventions could align with this upcoming initiative.
13	. Although, the PDM findings were used to inform relevant adaptation/adjustment of the implementation, PDMs were not conducted after each cycle of cash transfer.	Post distribution monitoring (PDM) should continue to be included in the future interventions to continually track the performance of the programme. It is also recommended that PDMs are conducted every end of a cash transfer cycle. Findings should be used to inform relevant adaptation/adjustment of the approach in implementation. For objectivity and quality assurance, its recommended that PDMs are conducted by external competent specialists (to the extent possible)to ensure feedback obtained is

		comprehensive and meets quality threshold to inform the programme.
14	<p>According to the community members participated in this evaluation , the following areas should be considered in the design of future replication or scale up of future interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i Increase the number of beneficiaries. ii Increase the size of cash grants. iii Provision of vocational training skills iv Water trucking intervention during emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Support more sustainable livelihoods options for the IDP communities such as conditional business grants. ii. There is need to increase the number of beneficiaries in the next phase iii. Increase the size of the cash grant by factoring in the inflation rate and household size (There may be need to negotiate this adjustment with the Cash Working Group) iv. Equip the young people and men with vocational skills for self-reliance v. WASH interventions should be included in the response i.e., water tankering or as water for enterprise (IGAs).

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: FRAMEWORK FOR QUESTIONS OF THE EVALUATION.

ANNEX 2: FINAL DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

ANNEX 3: LIST OF DESK REVIEW MATERIALS

ANNEX 4: CASE STORIES.

ANNEX 5: EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

ANNEX 6: QUANTITATIVE DATA

ANNEX 7: LIST OF FGDs

ANNEX 4: CASE STORIES

Case Story 1

State House IDP Camp, Hargeysa

“I am a mother of five children. Three are adolescent girls (18, 15, 13) and two are younger ones. My husband fell sick before the outbreak of covid-19 and this changed my role to that of a bread winner.

When covid-19 struck, I lost my only source of income. My business declined close to a collapse. Our economic life went down. We could only afford one meal per day when we were lucky. School fees for the children became impossible to pay. We were faced with many challenges. It was very difficult feeding my family. This went on until I was selected to benefit from a one-of business grant from Nafis Network. The self-help group and my CLA selected me as a potential beneficiary because of my situation.

When I received the cash grant, I boosted my business. From the increased income, I got the ability to buy food for my family and sanitary pads for my adolescent daughters. After the schools reopened, I was able to pay school fees for the children. I was also able to meet other basic household necessities.

My business is still running.

I forever remain grateful for this help.”

Case Story 2

State House IDP Camp, Hargeysa

“When covid-19 outbreak was declared in Somaliland, the government ordered all the social places including eateries. Those that had work outside of home were restricted as movements were disallowed. Children were asked to stay at home. This caused increased demand for food and other essential items like sanitary products and water among others. This significantly affected my household. My shop became very weak as expenditures continued to increase. As other families were equally affected, their ability to buy items from the shop went down. This affected the income levels from my shop.

With 10 household members to feed, this became very difficult to do. It became very difficult to afford 3 meals per day.

I received \$500 cash grant from Nafis to revive my business. I put the money in my shop. I also expanded the business by introducing sale of goat meat. This gives me some extra income. Before the cash grant, I used to make \$20 per month but today I make \$100 monthly.

Since I revived the business, I'm able to meet the needs of my household. I recommend that the cash grant is increased to support expansion of the business.”

Case Story 3

State House IDP Camp, Hargeysa

“When covid-19 pandemic struck our IDP camp, there was economic decline witnessed by many households. My household was not spared either. Increased cost of living that was exacerbated by government restrictions pushed my small shop to a near close. Initially, I earned \$300 a month but this reduced to about \$40 a month. Subsequently, it became very

difficult to feed my family, pay school fees and meet other basic needs. We could hardly afford 2 meals per day.

Through a selection criterion led by my self-help group, I was selected as recipient of a cash grant. I received \$500 to revive my business. No commission was charged. I put all of it to revive the business. From that point on, the shop was very well stocked. It became very busy especially because there was albeit of liquidity amongst the households that had received unconditional cash transfers. I also diversified the commodities by introducing vegetables and fruits in addition to the ordinary shop commodities.

The results of this support included the enhanced ability of my household to afford 3 meals a day, paid school fees for children when schools re-opened, paid for supplementary lessons for the children, was able to pack a snack for the children as they went to school and spousal tensions reduced compared to before.

I recommend a one more transfer to boost the business especially this period when the inflation rate is high and pushing high the cost of commodities.”

Management Response

	Key findings	Recommendations for Plan International	Response & Action	Short/ Medium/ Long Term (ST/MT/LT)	Responsible	By when
Strategic Recommendations						
1	The covid-19 response coordination structures provided a strategic platform for learning what other actors were doing, as well as communicating progress and successes.	It's recommended that continuation of active participation in the existing community and national level coordination structures in future responses as well.	<p>Response: Accepted</p> <p>Plan International Somalia/Somaliland regularly attends and reports to several cluster coordination, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Humanitarian Country Team 2. Education Cluster (Plan International chairs TWG of the ESC) 3. Food Security Cluster 4. Cash Working Group 5. Child Protection (CP) Working Group. 	ST	Programme Manager. Project Coordinators and relevant technical specialist (inc. CP and Education)	October 2022

			<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan International continue its active participation of all the relevant clusters. 2. Plan international will continue to send regular (monthly) updates of the future responses to cluster members. 			
Programmatic Recommendations						
2	<p>The recipients who received business grant reported that their businesses were still operational at the time of the evaluation. This will sustain them beyond the project period by providing more sustainable source of livelihood. Further linked to the flexible cash transfers, local traders reported that with the cessation of the cash transfers, businesses</p>	<p>It's recommended that the programmes continue to integrate business grants in the future emergency responses as they hold a promise to sustainable household livelihoods. Longer term measures would ensure market stability than when seasonal cash transfers are given. The pyramid should be inverted to have more beneficiaries receive conditional business grants than flexible cash transfers.</p>	<p>Response: Accepted Continue what Plan International Somalia did already and do it more.</p>	LT		Continuous

	had started to decline as purchasing power had reduced and fewer items were purchased per customer.	This will ensure more recipients transition to sustainable livelihoods post emergencies. It is recommended that Plan International adopts a cohort system to graduate those fully established and stable households to create space for new intake.	Action: Plan International will closely work with the local partner to provide business mentorship with these small businesses twice a year.			
3	The protracted nature of emergencies in Somaliland including drought, cyclones, flood, desert locusts, clan conflicts and now covid-19 requires that budgeting takes into account the fluidity and fluctuation of the foreign currency (USD), which is the alternative currency used in local purchases and other transactions in Somaliland. High inflation	It is recommended that the future cash transfer responses consider inflation in the food basket determination. The food basket size should also be based on the household size.	Response: Partially Accepted The Cash Working Group determines the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB), from which all cash transfers are based on. Before creating the MEB, Cash Working Groups (and individual organizations) conduct market assessments to examine inflation and commodities availability. Plan International adjusts the cash grants in accordance with the updated MEB.	MT- LT	Programme Manager	January 2023 with regular follow ups in the long run.

	was reported to have significantly influenced the cost of food and non-food commodities and negatively affected the stability of the small businesses supported through the conditional cash grants.		Action: Plan International will work closely with the Cash Working Group during market assessments to follow the inflation rates and the availability of commodities in the markets.			
4	Most pressing current needs were similar to those that the intervention had been addressing.	It's recommended that despite the similarity in the current most pressing needs to those that the intervention addressed, it might be good to explore other alternative forms of cash programming to respond to the needs. For instance, more sustainable approaches like giving conditional business grants accompanied by skills training and close technical supervision and monitoring	Response: Partially Accepted During the Covid-19 crisis the most pressing needs were basic needs: Food, Water, etc. The project was responding to those needs and provided a life-saving interventions. The nature of emergency programs does not fit to the developmental kind of interventions (ie. agriculture). However, a good strategy can be synergizing the emergency projects with resilience building and development ones (nexus programming).	LT	Country Director	February 2023

		might deliver more sustainable livelihoods options than flexible unconditional cash transfers. Seed vouchers for those that can practice agriculture may also be a more sustainable option. These approaches may also be accompanied with mobilizing and encouraging women, men and youths to either form or join the existing community-based savings and credit schemes to enable them to build household savings. This would enable them to secure family livelihoods.	Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan International will implement integrated programs during crises. Plan International will create synergies between its emergency and development projects to improve the resilience of the affected communities. 			
5	MESAF reported that it is contemplating reviving the women economic forum through which sustainable livelihood support initiative is being negotiated.	It's recommended that Plan International follows up with MESAF to establish how the future interventions could align with this upcoming initiative.	Response: Accepted Plan International acknowledges this recommendation and will follow up with MESAF. Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan International will follow-up with MESAF on this forum. 	LT	Programme Manager	November 2022

6	<p>According to the community members participated in this evaluation, the following areas should be considered in the design of future replication or scale up of future interventions:</p> <p>i Increase the number of beneficiaries. ii Increase the size of cash grants. iii Provision of vocational training skills iv Water trucking intervention during emergencies.</p>	<p>i. Support more sustainable livelihoods options for the IDP communities such as conditional business grants. ii. There is need to increase the number of beneficiaries in the next phase iii. Increase the size of the cash grant by factoring in the inflation rate and household size (There may be need to negotiate this adjustment with the Cash Working Group) iv. Equip the young people and men with vocational skills for self-reliance vi. WASH interventions should be included in the response i.e., water tankering or as water for enterprise (IGAs).</p>	<p>Response: Partially Accepted i. Conditional Business Grants: As reflected on the above reflections, unconditional cash transfer is most efficient way of delivering aid during crises – to save lives, as recommended by different assessments and donors. ii. This will depend on available funds. iii. MEB determines the size of cash grants, and providing over the agreed rates will cause more harm to the beneficiaries and other aid organizations. iv. This recommendation will be considered in resilience building and development projects. v. This is also well noted.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan International will include Water trucking activities in the future emergency response programmes. Plan International will increase the number of beneficiaries in the future response based on available funding. 	MT	Programme Manager	October 2022
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Recommendations on Coordination

7	<p>Key stakeholders like the relevant government line ministries (NDRA and MESAF) confirmed to have participated in the review of the selection criteria as well as in the verification of the final cash recipients. They provided their feedback directly to the project team in this regard. On the other hand, they were not involved in the initial development of the selection criteria.</p>	<p>It is recommended that Plan International and other actors should continue to involve the government stakeholders in beneficiary selection. This should be embraced as a good practice. It should also be integrated as a requirement in any frameworks developed to guide selection and targeting of cash grants beneficiaries. One further step to take would be exploring different ways to strengthen the involvement of the government stakeholders at an earlier stage.</p>	<p>Response: Partially Accepted</p> <p>Plan International engages all relevant government authorities during the kick-off of every project, however, the government officials keep changing constantly, this creates information gap.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the government to review and approve the selection criteria, so as they confirmed in the interviews, Plan International provided a chance to all relevant authorities to go through the selection criteria of the project beneficiaries. However, in order to ensure consistency, and avoid any information gap, Plan International will update the newly appointed government officials about the projects.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan International will engage relevant government agencies during the designing phase of the projects, to capture their inputs. • Plan International will conduct quarterly project review meetings and invite government agencies to reflect on the project progress. 	MT	Programme Manager	October 2022
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8	One key recommendation of NDRA was planning a joint impact assessment involving the government line ministries and other key stakeholders.	As recommended by NDRA inclusion of, and allocation of resources for joint impact assessment in future responses should be considered. This should also include periodical joint monitoring activities to ensure the government appraises the progress of the response, and that the response benefits from government feedback.	<p>Response: Partially Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the transparency, and accountability all evaluations are done by third party consultancies, however, Plan International will ensure to engage relevant government agencies to contribute to the evaluation exercises. Plan International will support relevant government agencies to do regular monitoring of the projects. <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan International will follow with NDRA to improve and strategies joint impact assessment. 	ST	Programme Manager	November 2023
9	Findings showed that the only gap in terms of coordination was with the nutrition working group.	It's recommended that future cash programmes should also coordinate with the nutrition working group to facilitate referrals of cases relevant to the working group.	<p>Response: Accepted</p> <p>Plan International acknowledges this recommendation and will follow up. The project team already coordinated with all relevant coordination platforms, such as Cash Working Group, and Food Security Cluster.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan International will make sure to strengthen engagement with the nutrition cluster. 			
Recommendations on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)						

10	The community approach used in the beneficiary selection proved very effective and embraced the do no harm principles by ensuring all was done transparently hence any potential conflicts were pre-empted.	It is recommended to continue implementing this approach in the future interventions with some adjustments-to involve more divers self-help groups during the development of the selection criteria. This will ensure it is exhaustive of the various vulnerabilities at the community level at the time.	<p>Response: Accepted Response The selection criteria are reviewed and approved by the government agencies and community committees including self-help groups.</p>			
11	Although findings confirmed that the feedback mechanism existed (hot line and email) it was reported that they were not known to all relevant stakeholders particularly the recipients of the conditional cash grants.	It is recommended that at the intervention design stage, it's important to consult with the affected populations to clarify the feedback mechanisms through which they would prefer to give and receive feedback. If other structures such as the community-based coordination committees are preferable, this should be clarified at that stage to ensure all recipients had similar information from the beginning. A hotline should	<p>Response: Partially Accepted Plan International conducts Rapid Needs Assessments and Rapid Gender Analysis in the affected communities to better understand the situation, needs, and design an appropriate interventions. However, we will do more community consultations in the target areas to get the community feedbacks at the design stage.</p>	ST	Programme Manager	November 2022

		<p>be installed and communicated to all the beneficiaries from the beginning to ensure they can get rapid support whenever it's needed. This will ensure effective communication and feedback between the recipients and the project team.</p>	<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan International will bring down AAP specialist to provide trainings to Plan International and partner staff. • Plan International will upgrade the FCRM mechanism at the COs. 			
12	<p>Although, the PDM findings were used to inform relevant adaptation/adjustment of the implementation, PDMs were not conducted after each cycle of cash transfer.</p>	<p>Post distribution monitoring (PDM) should continue to be included in the future interventions to continually track the performance of the programme. It is also recommended that PDMs are conducted every end of a cash transfer cycle. Findings should be used to inform relevant adaptation/adjustment of the approach in implementation.</p>	<p>Response: Partially Accepted Doing PDM after every cash transfer will create community assessment fatigue and will not be cost effective, however Plan International will conduct PDM at the completion of every phase. The finding of each PDM was adopted before the second phase.</p>	ST	Programme Manager	November 2023

		For objectivity and quality assurance, its recommended that PDMs are conducted by external competent specialists (to the extent possible) to ensure feedback obtained is comprehensive and meets quality threshold to inform the programme.	Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan International will engage external specialists to lead the PDMs. • Plan International will ensure PDMs are conducted at the end of each phase. 			
Recommendations on Cross-Cutting Themes						
13	Although this finding is not directly associated with the project itself, it is worth highlighting that some recipients reported incidences of stigmatization for having received support from the project. Some were labeled 'Mrs. covid-19'.	It's recommended that the project should continue supporting community education on the concept of cash programming to mitigate potential stigma associated with responses like Covid-19. Relevant messages should be integrated in the other	Response: Partially Accepted The project did a massive awareness campaign on the COVID-19, however, this finding is evidence of how severe was the COVID-19 stigmatization at the community level. Future interventions, we will make sure to imbedded attitude and behavioural change components for any socially sensitive interventions.	MT	Programme Manager	November 2022

		awareness campaigns on the same or different agendas.	<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan International will imbedded awareness raising component in the interventions like COVID-19, FGM and GBV to mitigate stigmatization. • Plan International will carry out conversation with the communities to better understand the community dynamics, perceptions. 			
14	Results of the past assessments linked the increasing cases of violence against children	It's recommended that Plan International should continue ensuring that cash-based programmes	<p>Response: Accepted</p> <p>Plan International acknowledges this recommendation and will follow.</p>			

	<p>including SGBV and marginalization of PWDs to the effects of protracted emergencies including drought and effects of covid-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>integrate protection, GBV and inclusion topics targeting particularly the recipients. Also, to include topics on positive parenting sessions particularly to raise awareness on child/youth rights (right to participate) as well as enhance communication skills for caregivers of PWDs.</p> <p>In addition, clear mitigation measures against risks associated with protection and SGBV should continue to be integrated in the design, implementation and reporting of future cash interventions. In this regard, PDM questions should include questions to monitor women and girls and other vulnerable group's participation, access to and safety of coordination, communication and feedback mechanisms. Protection specialists should be attached to cash.</p>	<p>Action:</p> <p>Plan International will add components of protection and GBV risk assessment in the PDMs.</p>			
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