



# PHILIPPINES CASH WORKING GROUP (CWG)

CASE STUDY FINDINGS



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## CASE STUDY FINDINGS – PHILIPPINES CASH WORKING GROUP (CWG)

*This case study report forms part of the findings from a Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) study on inter-agency collaboration for the delivery of Cash Transfer Programs (CTPs). The relationship between various forms and levels of inter-agency collaboration for the delivery of CTP and the efficiency and effectiveness of these programmes was examined via four case studies. For further details on the study scope, methodology and findings across cases, please refer to the full study report.*

The Philippines Cash Working Group (CWG) was selected as a case study to illustrate highly collaborative Cash Working Group forms of inter-agency collaboration for sector-focused cash assistance, with informal relationships and separate funding flows between members. It is distinctive from the other cases in that cash assistance is provided as part of a disaster response, including in preparedness, immediate and early-recovery response activities.

### **Key findings from this case study include the following:**

- Given the lack of a formal arrangement between its members, the CWG collaboration model offers limited capacity to enforce decisions made and relies instead on maintaining a supportive membership willing to follow standards and guidelines developed.
- However, there is a potential for indirect gains in cost-effectiveness from facilitated negotiations with FSPs and resources and time saved from linkages to government social safety programmes and from using tools developed by the CWG (e.g.. monitoring and evaluation tools).
- CWG-led collaboration provides opportunities for gains in effectiveness given the wide membership, its role in information sharing and the potential coverage of its membership.
- Critical to the success of the CWG has been the division of responsibilities between a CWG steering committee and a wider CWG, as well as the OCHA resources to support the CWG. These factors have allowed the CWG to focus on both technical issues and strategic coordination.
- The CWG plays a role in advocacy and has built a space for cash transfers central to emergency response in the Philippines. However it has not yet played a strong role in the advocacy of multi-sector cash assistance and the multi-sector use of cash has not been promoted strongly through the CWG.
- A key strength of the OCHA-led CWG collaborative model is the role of the CWG in preparedness planning. The CWG is active outside of an emergency and works ensuring cash programmes can be implemented rapidly and effectively in the face of an emergency.
- With clear linkages to government response agencies, and between the various phases of the responses, the CWG and partners are well placed to link into wider scale social-safety-net programmes both in the rapid delivery of emergency assistance and as part of a longer-term exit strategy for agencies engaged in CTP.

# I CRISIS AND CTP CONTEXT

The Philippines Cash Working Group was initially established in response to Typhoon Pablo in 2012, and has expanded since **as a technical group providing support in both emergency and non-emergency contexts**. With existing government social-transfer programmes, strong private sector experience in delivering remittances and a population familiar with receiving cash transfers, the Philippines presents a context in which the use of a cash modality in both humanitarian response and development programmes can be highly effective. **The Philippines is also recognised as a disaster-prone country, averaging 22 cyclones annually, of which six to seven cause severe damage.**<sup>1</sup> In addition to regularly occurring storms, some areas of the Philippines, particularly Mindanao, are home to recurring conflicts resulting in waves of forced displacement. As a result of these factors, OCHA established a permanent presence in 2007 with the objective of complementing the government's response to natural disasters and strengthening humanitarian coordination.

Most recently, the response capacity of humanitarian actors was tested with the arrival of **Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines on 8 November 2013** and was quickly classified by OCHA as an L3 emergency. Locally known as Typhoon Yolanda, the typhoon was reported by the Philippines National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) **as affecting 16 million people, resulting in 4.1 million displaced and 1.1 million homes severely damaged**. In the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan 'when it was predicted that CTP would be highly considered as a modality of assistance, given the country's experience in CTP and the scale of the disaster, CaLP Asia came to the Philippines to revive the Cash Working Group with assistance from UN-OCHA'. The use of cash as a modality to meet critical WASH, food, NFI, shelter and livelihoods needs of the typhoon-affected population became central to the response.<sup>2</sup>

By the time Typhoon Haiyan hit in 2013, cash transfers had become central to emergency response and the humanitarian community implemented one of the **largest scale cash-based interventions globally with 40% of the response (US\$485 million) being implemented via a cash-based modality**. In the response, 45 agencies provided cash assistance and the four largest (WFP, UNICEF, ICRC and Oxfam) alone implemented US\$36 million in cash programming to reach 1.4 million individuals.<sup>3</sup>

The response to Typhoon Haiyan was managed under the OCHA-coordinated sector-based coordination structures, with the majority of the cash programming occurring under food security, shelter and early recovery/livelihoods. According to OCHA tracking of the cash response, **759,000 Filipinos received an UCT, close to 84,000 participated in a cash for work programme, and an estimated US\$6.95 million was injected into the local markets**. The response was mainly conditional cash-transfers, representing 77% of the cash programmes, which focused on livelihoods/early recovery (60%), food security (20%) and shelter (20%). The government also implemented a cash-transfer programme directly – the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shelter cash assistance programme – targeting nearly 300,000 individuals.

By the time of the shift from emergency to early recovery three months after Typhoon Haiyan in January 2014, 413,000 people had received cash assistance. The **shift to early recovery was matched by a shift from UCTs to CCTs and CFW, targeting economic recovery, market systems, livelihoods and shelter programmes focused on 'building back better'**.

Across the emergency and early recovery phases of the response to Typhoon Haiyan, and in the responses since, **agencies used a range of private sector financial service providers** to deliver cash assistance, including money transfer/remittance companies, 'cash in hand', mobile money (UNDP), e-transfer via Visa and Mastercard (Oxfam and World Vision) and banking institutions.

The re-activation of the CWG proved useful to the humanitarian community in response not only to Typhoon Haiyan, but also to a series of additional storms and conflict-related displacement across 2014–16. Of particular interest to this study is the rapidly shifting context in the Philippines **between emergency response, early recovery and non-emergency** requiring agencies and the supporting humanitarian architecture to **have clear preparedness plans in place and be capable of scaling up** quickly as needed.

<sup>1</sup> OCHA, Philippines, 2016. Accessed December 8 2016: [www.unocha.org/philippines/about-ocha-philippines/about-ocha-philippines](http://www.unocha.org/philippines/about-ocha-philippines/about-ocha-philippines)

<sup>2</sup> Philippines Cash Working Group Terms of Reference (ToR), March 2015.

<sup>3</sup> OCHA, Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, 2014.

## 2 CWG FORMATION AND EVOLUTION

The formation of the current Cash Working Group in the Philippines was initially facilitated by the CaLP Asia Regional Office in 2012 as part of the response to Typhoon Pablo (Bopha). The WG aimed to provide technical support and coordination assistance to its members **but, without a dedicated leadership or clear governance structure, the group became dormant** in early 2013. In late 2013, when Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines, the **Cash Working Group was reactivated with an OCHA Cash Coordinator, funded by DFID, and the support of the CaLP Asia Regional Office.** This was the first time globally that OCHA had provided a ‘Cash Coordinator’ through their emergency surge capacity, indicating recognition within OCHA of both the importance and difficulty of coordinating a cash-transfer-based response. It was also the first time CaLP had provided a deployment, which was done rapidly, to support the establishment of a CWG in an emergency response. OCHA’s logic behind creating the OCHA Cash Coordinator position was that by positioning OCHA as the lead of the CWG, the coordinator would be able to work in close partnership with the OCHA Inter-cluster Coordinator (based in Manila) and the cluster leads reporting to OCHA’s head office.

Given the context of the response occurring in an archipelago with access constraints between the islands and areas hit by the typhoon, the Cash Coordinator **established sub-national regional CWGs** in Roxas City, Capiz (chaired by WFP and STC) and in Guiuan, Eastern Samar (chaired by members on a rotational basis). In early 2014 the response shifted from **emergency to early recovery, during which the bulk of the cash programming took place through conditional cash programmes, such as cash for work and livelihoods grants.** The achievements of the CWG in supporting the initial response, and the sheer number of agencies using CTPs (45+) prompted the humanitarian community to draw the following conclusion:

*‘The **post-Haiyan experience highlighted the relevance of the CWG and sustaining its work is critical.** The OCHA Cash Coordinator, who is on temporary assignment, had laid down the groundwork for some preparedness and institutionalisation initiatives that would help cash transfer stakeholders in the Philippines, including the government, be more cash-ready in future responses. The CWG is the body that is expected to follow through on these initiatives. However, as seen in the past, Cash Working Group members were active only at the onset of the humanitarian response when coordination among CTP actors is critical. As the response progresses, each CTP actor gets pulled to focus on his/her individual agency’s cash-based intervention; thus, active participation in CWG tends to dissipate.’<sup>4</sup>*

## 3 CWG COLLABORATION STRUCTURES

Given the limitations of an ad-hoc CWG to be able to respond effectively in an rapid onset emergency, **agencies agreed in January 2015 to a formalised structure for the CWG, and established a permanent CWG steering committee (SC)** with the mandate of providing direction to the CWG, agreeing on strategic actions and providing input to the HCT. The formalisation of this CWG SC was laid out in a detailed Terms of Reference and Action Procedures. At the time of this study, the CWG SC had been active for nearly two years and had a core membership of 13 members; two national government agencies (DSWD – Department of Social Welfare and Development and DTI – Department of Trade and Industry), ILO, WFP, UNICEF, WV, SCI, Oxfam, Plan International, ACF, CARE, UN-OCHA and the Philippines Red Cross. Meeting on a monthly basis, the CWG SC is the main coordination body for CTPs and, if needed, provides technical support to the various clusters in preparedness, response and post-disaster activities.

**The CWG SC is made up of a core group of members from the wider CWG.** The decision on who makes up the membership of the SC was the result of consultation among the members, and discussions and agreement across the current SC. As an example, ILO was brought to the SC in late 2016 in order to develop and support stronger links between CTs and Social Protection and now leads the task team on Social Protection. The CWG SC also has an MoU task team (led by Oxfam), Market Assessment task team (led by WFP) and a Beneficiary Targeting task team (led by SCI).

<sup>4</sup> CWG Philippines: steering committee Terms of Reference and Action Procedures, February 2015.

The activities of the CWG SC are informed by a **much broader CWG made up of nearly 50 members** as of December 2016, including the CWG SC agencies, local and international NGOs, donors (ECHO, AECID, USAID), UN agencies, **government line ministries and financial service providers**. Membership of the CWG requires interested parties to submit an Expression of Interest, and if validated by the CWG SC, a further letter of commitment to the CWG Secretariat. The CWG meets on a quarterly basis, or ad-hoc as needed in the case of an emergency, and is focused on providing a 'technical platform for collaboration and learning related to multi-sector, cross-sector, and sector-specific CTPs in emergency response, preparedness, and development activities in the country'.<sup>5</sup> Chaired on a rotating basis by a member of the CWG SC and **supported by an OCHA secretariat** (for information management and administration), the CWG has specific structures (frequency of meeting and decision-making procedures, chair and secretariat roles) in both emergency and non-emergency contexts. Notably, **when the emergency structure is activated, OCHA automatically takes the chair and leadership of the CWG**.

Critically, the structure includes the support of OCHA, in terms of information management (IM), administrative follow-ups and clear pathways to raise issues with the ICC and the HCT. For example, the CWG maintains a useful and regularly updated interactive mapping platform for FSPs across the country, which includes locations, details on the types of service, contacts, and other relevant information maintained with **the technical support of OCHA's IM unit in-country**. The division between the CWG general membership and the core membership of the SC also allows the CWG the flexibility to focus on trainings and capacity-building initiatives of its general membership while the core group focuses on technical aspects and the strategic coordination of CTPs.

## 4 PROGRAMME DESIGN FEATURES

Although the **CWG provides technical guidance, it is not mandated to develop or enforce a standardised approach to cash transfers for use by its members**. Instead, the CWG aims to 'develop, where possible, common approaches and standardised procedures as well as minimum requirements'.<sup>6</sup> This differs from more formal collaboration arrangements, which often agree to a harmonised approach for the operational delivery of cash assistance and under which members can hold each other accountable. The CWG in the Philippines has, however, taken significant steps towards harmonising approaches across various phases of the project cycle, mainly through a **systematic approach to information sharing and the use of findings, and adherence to information standards and norms adopted by the group**. This section highlights key features of the CWG model that have impacted various phases of the project cycle regardless of the limitations of the informality of the relationship between its members.

**Levels of collaboration:** The table below shows the degree of collaboration achieved by CWG partners across the various stages of the CTP project cycle.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Philippines Cash Working Group, Terms of Reference, March 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Philippines CWG, Terms of Reference, March 2015.

<sup>7</sup> As defined by the CTP collaboration framework developed under the ERC project 'Increasing the Uptake of Multi-Purpose Cash Grants in Emergency Responses'.

CTP project cycle	Degree of collaboration
Needs assessment	Harmonisation of design
Market analysis	Harmonisation of design
Operational feasibility analysis	Harmonisation of design
Modality Selection	Harmonisation of design
Funding	Information sharing
Targeting & vulnerability selection	Information sharing
Contracting FSPs & CDM	Information sharing
M&E	Harmonised design & highly collaborative implementation
Protection	Information sharing
Exit strategy/Link to SP	Harmonised design & highly collaborative implementation

**Situation response analysis – cash and preparedness:** The CWG, particularly in non-emergency times, is focused strongly on preparedness activities with the aim of building links between the government-led social protection platforms and humanitarian agencies, as well as providing timely support in case of an emergency. There has been agreement across interviewees and within the literature review that the focus on preparedness and a timely contractor with FSPs as a result of strong FSP mapping activities done by the CWG, has had an impact on the speed and capacity of partners to deliver cash in a timely manner, thus reducing the reliance on NFIs and direct food assistance in the immediate response. The strong presence of WFP in the CWG, including as the lead for the Market Assessment task team, also suggests that agencies that historically have focused on in-kind assistance, are strongly considering cash-based modalities as an immediate emergency response tool. The CWG SC members have played an active role in the Early Response Preparedness Working Group (ERPW) and in support of developing cluster-led preparedness plans. Although there does not seem to be any evidence of FSP contracts being signed in advance (prepositioning of cash assistance) the regularly-updated mapping of FSPs across the country provides agencies with a quick reference point for identifying a delivery mechanism if needed. The reality of cash programming in a context such as the Philippines with a large mass of unconnected islands and the inability to predict where a natural disaster might occur, also suggests that preparedness planning needs to include the flexibility to choose FSPs and delivery mechanisms based on the localised context in which the crisis occurs. Therefore, information sharing and a regularly updated FSP mapping provide an effective starting point for contracting FSP quickly following a disaster.

Although an evaluation of the overall cash response was not available at the time of the study, the cash response to the most recent typhoon (Typhoon Haima), which hit the Philippines in late October 2016, might enable an assessment of how the timeliness of delivery of assistance may have been improved as a result of preparedness activities conducted by the CWG.

**Response design and plan – Multi-Purpose Cash Grants (MPGs):** As noted in the CaLP-led ‘Cash Coordination in the Philippines: A review of lessons learned during the response to Super Typhoon Haiyan’, multi-sector cash assistance was not considered central to the response. Currently in the Philippines Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs) fall under various sectors of response. CT interventions have been designed through the cluster system under which the response is organised, with transfer values calculated according to the needs of each particular sector. For example, the CWG provides technical support to CTs delivered to support food security, livelihoods and early recovery, and shelter/NFI objectives, although it does not provide guidance on the use of one transfer to reach these various needs across sectors. Agencies are then, in practice, conducting multiple needs assessments, targeting exercises and transfers in order to reach the multi-sector needs of one beneficiary, which is comparatively less cost-effective than the provision of one multi-sector transfer. In the example of a STC programme, PDM data

from a shelter programme showed that most of the grant intended for shelter was used to cover food needs. Recognising this shortcoming of providing multiple UCTs for sector-specific objectives, the STC programme was able to adapt and combine the transfers through an integrated multi-sectoral package in the recovery phase of the programme, which might have responded more directly to the needs of households targeted and enabled cost savings to agencies.

Arguably it could be stated that the CWG, due to its wide membership, which includes strong UN and other sector-mandated agencies and OCHA leadership, has not been able to develop a multi-sector approach to the emergency response, and as such the cost savings available across the humanitarian community of providing a multi-sector transfer commonly referred to as a Multi-Purpose Grants (MPG), has been limited.

**Tools and approaches – CTP guidance notes:** Efforts have been made by the CWG to produce an Operations Protocol for CTs in the Philippines inclusive of the following sections: **Conditions for CTPs, Protocol and Reporting, Delivery Mechanisms, Market Assessments, M&E, chapters with CTP Guidance for each cluster, FSPs and Costs and Targeting.** As of August 2016, it was agreed among the CWG SC members that different agencies would lead the drafting of each section. The finalised document provides clear guidance to partners in-country; however, as mentioned, it **does not aim to provide one harmonised approach or strategy for CTPs to be used by the CWG members.** It does offer opportunities for gains through inter-agency approaches, such as in market assessments, and towards achieving a better-informed response built on the best practices of its member agencies.

**Contracting FSPs:** Although the CWG has not gone so far as to lead negotiations with FSPs on behalf of its membership, it has taken three key steps, which are likely to have impacted the capacity of agencies to contract FSPs in an efficient manner. First, **the CWG includes FSPs among its membership.** The FSPs are actively engaged in the meetings, present to the group, and participate in capacity-building activities, and as such, the CWG provides an open space for discussion between members and FSPs. Second, the CWG, through the support of the OCHA information management unit, has created a **regularly updated mapping of FSPs across the country** and the availability of different providers and mechanisms in different locations. And finally, the CWG has served as a **platform for sharing information on FSP and services provided between members,** enabling partners to be aware of the successes or challenges of different delivery mechanisms and of the costs of different FSPs. Although agencies might reach greater benefits from negotiating as a group, and this has not yet been explored by the membership of the CWG, the information sharing between agencies ensures all agencies are offered the same rates for the same package of services.

**Exit strategy and linkages to social protection – joint implementation with government counterparts:** The Philippines CWG has prioritised cash assistance programming that is in support of government agency CTPs and links to wider social-safety programmes. This has been facilitated by the **active participation of key government agencies within the CWG SC** and the integration of the OCHA-led response mechanisms within the government disaster response architecture. In 2007 the government institutionalised the cluster coordination structure, and as a result OCHA works closely in support of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Office of Civil Defence, with inter-cluster coordination and HCT members acting as co-lead agencies for respective government response clusters (OCHA Philippines, 2016).

Three examples illustrate the benefits the **close collaboration between the CWG and the government** has produced for the response: first, the standardised SOPs for cash for work programmes; second, the link to the social protection programme ‘Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program’ (4Ps); and third, the ease of transitioning from early recovery to development and social protection programmes. In the early recovery phase of the Typhoon Haiyan response, when agencies shifted from the provision of UCTs to CCTs with a focus on CFW, the CWG along with government counterparts facilitated the drafting of SOPs specific to cash for work programmes delivered by humanitarian agencies and/or government agencies. This standardised approach to CFW and SOPs included an agreed daily wage rate and specifications on the numbers of hours worked, etc. and reduced the likelihood of discrepancies between cash for work programmes implemented by different agencies or in different locations, regardless of whether the aid was provided by humanitarian agencies or government counterparts.

Another example is the **use of the existing 4Ps social protection programme run by the government as an entry point for the rapid provision of food assistance (via an UCT)** following Haiyan. The 4Ps social safety net is targeted at ‘extremely poor’ households with children and provides a conditional cash-transfer – conditional

on its use to support expenses for children, including health, education and nutritional needs. In the Haiyan response, WFP and the 4Ps programme identified 200,000 households registered to the programme residing within the communities most heavily impacted by the typhoon. WFP was then able to provide an additional 'emergency' top-up to these households in December 2013 and again in January 2014 using the 4Ps delivery mechanisms. Although this did not include the 'new poor' as a result of the disaster, it did provide a mechanism to reach vulnerable households rapidly, and at scale, as part of the overall response.

Finally, the links between the CWG and government counterparts have the potential to provide **opportunities for a smooth transition from emergency response, to early recovery, to development** programmes, including through a direct transfer of vulnerable households identified by humanitarian agencies to a government-led social-safety-net programme likely to be funded by development actors (on budget support). Although this has not yet fully been explored in the Philippines, the positioning of the CWG and role of government agencies on the CWG SC suggest that these pathways could be explored across the different phases of a response.

## 5 PROGRAMME OUTPUTS, RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

In response to Typhoon Haiyan, 45 agencies worked to deliver US\$34 million in cash assistance to 1.4 million Filipinos, mainly in the form of conditional cash transfers (77%). The cash assistance was delivered to address needs mainly in the food security, shelter and livelihoods/recovery sectors. This represented one of the largest cash-based humanitarian response efforts at the time.<sup>8</sup> **This scale of response can likely be in part attributed to the strength of the Cash Working Group** and the role of the OCHA-deployed dedicated cash coordinator and information management team.

However, given that agencies delivered programmes independently of each other, it would be outside of the scope of this study to draw any conclusions on the outcomes and impact of the cash assistance provided, and therefore the overall effectiveness of the cash-transfer programmes delivered in the Philippines. It would also be difficult to attribute any results in the independently run programmes directly to the work of the Cash Working Group and is therefore not useful for this analysis. This also highlights a gap in inter-agency frameworks, which theoretically would be within the scope and capacity of the CWG to develop and use to capture the collective impact of its members work.

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<sup>8</sup> OCHA, Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, 2014.



## 6 WIDER CONTEXTUAL FACTORS AND CASH WORKING GROUP ADAPTATION

As mentioned above, the CWG in the Philippines was formed in a context prone to disasters and where **OCHA had an established presence providing a starting-point platform for the coordination and delivery of cash assistance** within a well-established response. In addition, as highlighted by numerous studies on the Philippines, the **context is conducive to cash programming, creating a supportive operational environment**. However, the opportunities created by these two factors were further advanced by the **dedicated resources provided to the CWG**, by cash coordination and by information management support, which enabled agencies to share information and effectively coordinate the cash response.

**Humanitarian architecture and cash coordination:** Given the Philippines' predisposition to disasters, OCHA established a permanent presence in 2007 institutionalised within the government crisis-response systems. This laid the foundations for a long-term and highly-structured Cash Working Group with strong government representation. In order to capitalise on the opportunities for cash transfers in the Philippines and respond to the requirements of a large-scale cash response, the CWG needed to be established with a strong coordination structure and avenues for technical support. OCHA and the CaLP were aware of this need and rapidly supported the CWG through their surge capacity in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan. With the **initial support of DFID, and surge capacity from both OCHA and CaLP, the CWG was provided with a starting point** from which it could grow and adapt to meet the needs of the CT community in the Philippines. The CWG leadership under OCHA during an emergency, including a **dedicated CWG coordinator and information management unit, gave the CWG the same access to resources as other sector-based clusters** in the response.

**Conducive operating environment:** As noted in the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2014), the Philippines presents a context highly conducive to CT programmes, which can be summarised as:

- History of use of cash transfers as a social safety net and disaster-response tool, beginning with the 4Ps programme in 2008 and the response to Typhoon Ketsana in 2009. Since 2009, 53 donors have contributed US\$693 million to cash responses in the Philippines.
- Status as middle income country with a financially literate population, financial infrastructure and integrated markets.
- Cultural of remittances.
- Well-established social protection programmes and familiarity with targeted social transfers.
- Strong private sector, including a range of financial service providers.

These **factors that facilitated cash-based responses also allowed agencies to address some of the contextual barriers** that in other cases would have created a challenge to the effective delivery of cash at scale, particularly the geographic areas of coverage-need across a wide archipelago not easily connected by roads or access networks. The use of cash in remittances by the government social protection programmes and as a disaster-response tool has led to the establishment of a large network of FSPs across the islands, which can be accessed by agencies as needed to scale up a response. In addition, political support for cash transfers and beneficiary familiarity with the concept of social transfers, can in turn reduce challenges faced in building the acceptance of cash programmes or local-level buy-in.

## 7 PERCEPTIONS AROUND EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

This section aims to summarise the views shared by respondents regarding specifically the impact of collaboration on efficiency and effectiveness. Findings have been anonymised at their request.

In terms of cost effectiveness, the CWG's role as a strong information-sharing and coordination platform with a wide membership of agencies, government counterparts and FSPs, was cited as **a facilitating factor in the formation of partnerships bilaterally between agencies** within the group. In addition, the link to the other sectors and clusters allowed members to develop inter-sectoral responses with complementary activities across sectors. For example, a partner with a livelihoods programme might provide the training or rebuilding activities while another partner will support with an unconditional cash-transfer. **Membership of the CWG has proved to be a strong entry point for a number of partnerships between the agencies**; some examples include an Oxfam and WFP programme currently working on the delivery of assistance in locations affected by the protracted crisis in Mindanao, or a WV and Oxfam joint programme that works through a shared FSP. WFP was also cited as using the CWG as a space to search for new partners.

Another opportunity provided by the wide membership of the group and the focus on information sharing is in cost savings at the agency level for contracting with FSPs. As **a platform for the collaboration of agencies, the CWG acts indirectly as a facilitator in the negotiation of services with FSPs**. Although the CWG does not negotiate directly, by sharing information on the FSPs, by including FSPs in its membership and creating a space for agencies to discuss contracts and services provided by FSPs, the CWG contributes to information sharing for more cost-efficient service provision by FSPs.

In terms of the potential of the CWG, the greatest potential gains may result from the strength of its membership and effectiveness. As an example, the **joint development of tools and approaches**, role in **partnership with local government structures** and mandated **representation on the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)**, and in the Inter-cluster Coordination mechanism, **harmonisation of activities, and coordination** across different geographic areas **reducing the likelihood of beneficiary duplication**, were all cited across this study as leading to a **more accountable and effective cash response**. Agencies also share information on gaps identified through the CWG, allowing the space for another agency to respond if they have the capacity, ensuring the greatest use of resources between agencies to reach a range of needs.

However, this potential is constrained by the lack of any enforcing power between the members. The CWG relies on its membership's support in implementing cash programmes in line with the guidance and standards agreed by the CWG, yet **the CWG does not have the power or mandate to ensure agencies implement in an aligned manner** or to hold them accountable for any divergence from the agreed approach of the group. This factor has the potential to negatively impact effectiveness if agencies decide to go ahead with their own individual approaches and ignore the guidance provided by the CWG. A stronger monitoring role or inter-agency monitoring framework within the CWG might be able to address issues of enforceability by highlighting to the wider humanitarian community, including donors, which agencies had aligned with the CWG approaches, standards and guidelines.

Another key challenge faced by the informal Cash Working Group model of collaboration is the sustainability of the wider CWG membership. The membership was reported as wanting training and capacity-building activities, which, although likely to contribute to a more effective response, are difficult to organise and finance. So, although the wide membership offers opportunities for partnerships and complementary programming, it also **requires keeping the membership engaged and content with the CWG itself, which has proven costly and may not be sustainable over the longer term**. As such, it was stated by participants in this study that potential gains in effectiveness of a highly-collaborative approach with a large membership may be partially offset by the costs required to keep a membership engaged and supportive.

## 8 KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Philippines case study shows that a strong CWG with a formalised structure that is well integrated into the OCHA and government response systems can deliver gains in effectiveness across the response, and possibly also cost efficiency. The potential for gains in cost efficiency from facilitated negotiations with FSPs, resources and time saved from strong links to social-safety-net programmes were cited as a key strength of the CWG model. This is partially as a result of the dedicated resources available to the group, but also because of the wider membership of the CWG, including humanitarian agencies, government counterparts and members of the private sector, which provides a space for discussion between the various parties. The role of the CWG as a space for information sharing and discussion led to the formation of partnerships between members of the group and the design of complementary programmes between member agencies, potentially contributing to the overall cost-effectiveness of the response.

The potential gains in efficiency and effectiveness, however, are also likely driven by a highly-conducive operational environment support to cash programming across a challenging geographic context. This also highlights the difficulty in determining where coordination and the potential benefits of a highly-coordinated response end and collaboration begin. In this case, the Philippines coordination model more or less represents a lesser degree of collaboration between agencies.

These potential achievements in efficiency and effectiveness can in part be attributed to the structure of the group with a clear division of responsibilities between a CWG steering committee and a wider CWG, as well as dedicated OCHA human resources and information management to support the CWG. These factors have allowed the CWG to focus on technical issues and strategic coordination under the direction of the steering committee.

One strength of the OCHA-led CWG collaborative model has been the role of the CWG in providing the link between emergency response and early recovery activities, as well as ensuring cash preparedness activities are central to the group during non-emergency contexts. The CWG remains active outside of emergencies and works to ensure that cash programmes can be implemented rapidly in the face of an emergency. Again, this contributes to the speed of delivery in case of an emergency and the cost-effectiveness of a response, but needs to be taken in consideration with the costs of maintaining a strong Cash Working Group during non-emergency phases, including the costs of keeping an engaged and supportive membership.

However, the limitations of a CWG with a lack of a formal arrangement between member agencies are highlighted by its inability to enforce decisions made and reliance instead on maintaining a supportive membership willing to follow agreed standards and guidelines developed by the CWG. If agencies within the group decide to go their own way as a result of new leadership, disengagement with the group, or even just plain disagreement with the CWG, it is likely to have a negative impact and risks contributing to a less cost-effective response.

Given that the CWG is housed within the OCHA cluster-based response, the capacity of the group to advocate for cash assistance, particularly for a multi-sectoral approach to cash assistance, also appears to have been constrained. The mandate of the group states its role in the provision of technical support to the clusters, and as such the group has been slower to provide guidance on multi-sectoral approaches to cash assistance that offer wider gains in cost effectiveness than multiple single-sector transfers.

In conclusion, it is clear that a highly-collaborative Cash Working Group model has much to offer in terms of potential gains in efficiency and effectiveness; however, these potential gains must be weighed against the potential risks of working through a model with no formal agreement between partners or cost-sharing of the group's core resources (staffing and information management) and a limited capacity to enforce decisions across its member agencies.

### **Sources:**

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### **Key Informant Interviews:**

- Rowena Dacsig (UN-OCHA Philippines, Humanitarian Affairs Analyst)
- Maria Agnes Palacio (UN-OCHA Philippines, National Disaster Response Advisor)



The Cash Learning Partnership

Recent global initiatives have reaffirmed the potential for Cash-Transfer Programmes (CTP) to effectively and efficiently meet a wide range of disaster-affected populations' needs while preserving dignity and choice. Although much work has been done in advocating for the benefits of CTP and enhancing its use in humanitarian action, relatively less research has explored the means through which cash transfers can be delivered to maximise their potential. With the increasing funding gaps faced by humanitarian actors globally – compounded by increasingly protracted crises – demonstrating efficiency and effectiveness has become critical to ensuring the best possible allocation of limited resources to meet the needs of crisis-affected populations.

While there are different, strongly held views about how to organise stakeholders to maximise efficiency and effectiveness, evidence about how well different delivery models provide quality CTPs in different contexts – including governance and collaboration arrangements – is scarce. For example, which is more efficient and effective: diverse competitors responding to harmonised specifications or a single delivery mechanism able to access economies of scale? In which contexts, and under what enabling environments? What collaboration mechanisms maximise quality, coverage and consistency of delivery?

This study tests the commonly held assumption that greater collaboration results in greater efficiency or effectiveness. It establishes drivers and measures of efficiency and effectiveness in CTP delivery, characterises different models of collaboration for cash delivery and assesses these different models against the measures of efficiency and effectiveness.

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