

AFGHANISTAN RESPONSE

How can we ensure that Cash and Voucher Assistance does not exacerbate or create risks for women and girls?

November 2021

The changes in the Afghanistan operational environment are affecting the way humanitarians work but also creating additional risks for specific individuals such as female-headed households. Some of these risks may be related specifically to Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA).

While humanitarian actors are assessing feasibility and planning for large-scale CVA in Afghanistan, here below are some essential points to keep in mind to ensure that centrality of protection and “do no harm” are part of every intervention.

This tip sheet outlines specific risks for women in CVA and offers contextualised and concrete mitigation and prevention actions in Afghanistan. *This tip sheet will be revised periodically and should be seen as a live document.*

For more info/guidance please check this [key guidance](#) and contact Cappelletti@unfpa.org or Terry.Alovi@rescue.org

PARTICIPATION & INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

- Advocate for Female headed households (such as widows) to be part of the CVA scheme. Make sure this population does receive communication around CVA.
- Should you use *community-based targeting*, make sure that women and vulnerable groups are involved in the process in a relevant way as this methodology has the potential to overlook some specific groups such as the elderly, the disabled, religious minorities, etc.
- Use various channels of communication and go through local networks to reach out to women and vulnerable groups.

ACCESS / MODALITY

- Make sure women, especially single women-headed households can access CVA in regions where they cannot move alone. This may mean delivering CVA at home (door to door) if this does not trigger additional risks for women or for staff, or otherwise organizing additional ways that women access can access CVA distribution.
- Rural vs urban areas: make sure to take into account the needs/limitations of people living in remote places. Partner with local networks to identify and access especially the ones that are usually left behind such as people living with a disability, older persons, single women-headed households, etc.
- Plan deliveries in a way that does not put beneficiaries at risk. Discuss with the intended female recipients about timing, days, locations, set-up, etc. A way to get women’s feedback is to engage with local actors (local community health workers, women-focused (I)NGOs’ staff, etc.)
- When identifying the delivery mechanism for CVA, keep in mind that women and other diverse individuals may not have access to a bank account, ATM or mobile phone, even if these options are open to some or most men.



AFGHANISTAN RESPONSE

How can we ensure that Cash and Voucher Assistance does not exacerbate or create risks for women and girls?

November 2021

- Make sure to train financial service agents (such as Hawalas) on abuse of power, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), fraud, etc. and make them sign a Code of Conduct. Posters on SEA should be visible at every CVA delivery point (understood by all, focus on visuals and using local language).
- Ensure that those delivering the cash are trained and aware of the zero tolerance towards SEA and are trained on how to refer allegations of SEA, especially if cash in hand is chosen as the best modality
- Whenever possible identify “allies” (men who are working with women's groups and/or protection partners) to support in the distribution itself especially if cash in hand /cash over the counter is identified as the best modality
- Coordinate and notify protection actors present in the targeted area when / where large scale distributions are taking place. Whenever possible, a protection staff or partner should be present during distribution.

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

- Advocate to find alternative ways of identification than biometrics /Tazkiras or Tokens (ID cards) in a way to not expose specific groups at further risk and to make sure all vulnerable individuals (including women not carrying formal identification) still get life-saving assistance.

CVA AND VIOLENCE AT HOME / IN THE COMMUNITY

- To the extent possible, coordinate with protection actors on the ground as CVA can exacerbate some intra-household or community tensions – especially in a context where cash is very difficult to obtain. When protection female staff are able to work and move around, make sure to liaise with them and refer any case of violence you may come across. If there are no protection actors present on the ground, liaise with community networks or women focused organizations.
- While CVA is known to have the potential to decrease intra-households' tensions or violence it could also unfortunately exacerbate risks for women and girls, such as the ones related to harmful traditional practices. Coordinate with community-based organisations to raise awareness around this topic with male and community leaders.

NOTA BENE:

At this time, there is no clear recommendation to provide CVA to women survivors of violence through a case management system before having undertaken a strong risk analysis exercise, and triangulating with CVA feasibility assessments.

One page matrix: an easy-to-use one page tool to undertake a comprehensive GBV risk analysis of CVA programming is available in [English, Dari and Pashto](#)