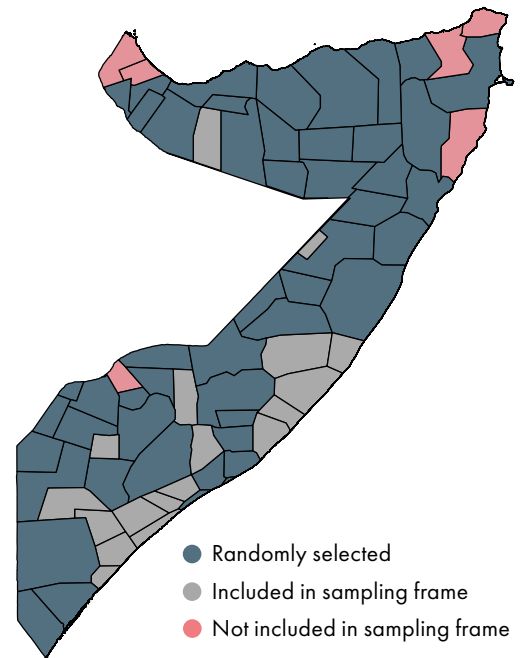


The participation gap persists in Somalia

The Cash Barometer

February 2022

Executive summary



Ground Truth Solutions has been tracking the experiences of aid recipients in Somalia and Somaliland since 2017. In this time, cash and voucher recipients have consistently requested more involvement and consultation from aid actors than they receive. Despite ongoing efforts to centralise Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) in Somalia's response planning, there are still significant gaps in the inclusion of affected people in decision-making on aid.

Only 25% of the 1,526 cash and voucher recipients we spoke to in October 2021 feel their opinions are considered by aid providers. This falls short of the AAP objective of the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) to increase the percentage of respondents who feel their opinions are taken into account from 37% to 50%¹. Without participation, recipients feel plans and activities are poorly communicated and many therefore feel uninformed about available aid.

People that receive cash and vouchers need clearer key information. Almost 90% of respondents stress the importance of knowing how long they will receive cash or voucher assistance, but only 38% actually know. The calculus used to determine transfer values and the targeting criteria used by aid providers are also unclear to most recipients.

Cash and voucher recipients call for broader coverage across the response. To explore what people consider fair, we asked them to choose between two hypothetical scenarios: would they prefer smaller transfers supporting more people in their community or larger transfers targeting fewer people? Broader coverage is preferred by 63% even if that means a smaller transfer. This preference seems to align with people's tendency to share assistance. Just over half of the people we spoke share their cash or voucher assistance with people outside their household.

On a more positive note, 75% of respondents say their ability to meet their most important needs has improved "somewhat" or "a lot" over the past six months. Forty percent say they can now either "mostly" or "completely" meet their most important needs, up from just 22% in 2020.

Time series data

Aid recipients across Somalia have repeatedly responded to questions about fairness, participation, information, and relevance as part of the Cash Barometer initiative. The time series graphs below represent the proportion of respondents who provided a positive response ("mostly yes" or "yes completely") to the questions asked in both years. However, it is important to note that the targeted sample has changed over

This bulletin presents an overview of the findings from Ground Truth Solutions' survey of internally displaced persons (IDPs), non-IDPs, returnees, refugees, and host community members in Somalia, who have received cash and voucher assistance (CVA) in the last three months.

With generous funding from the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), this survey was carried out in October 2021 in 15 regions and 33 districts of the South Central, Somaliland, and Puntland states.

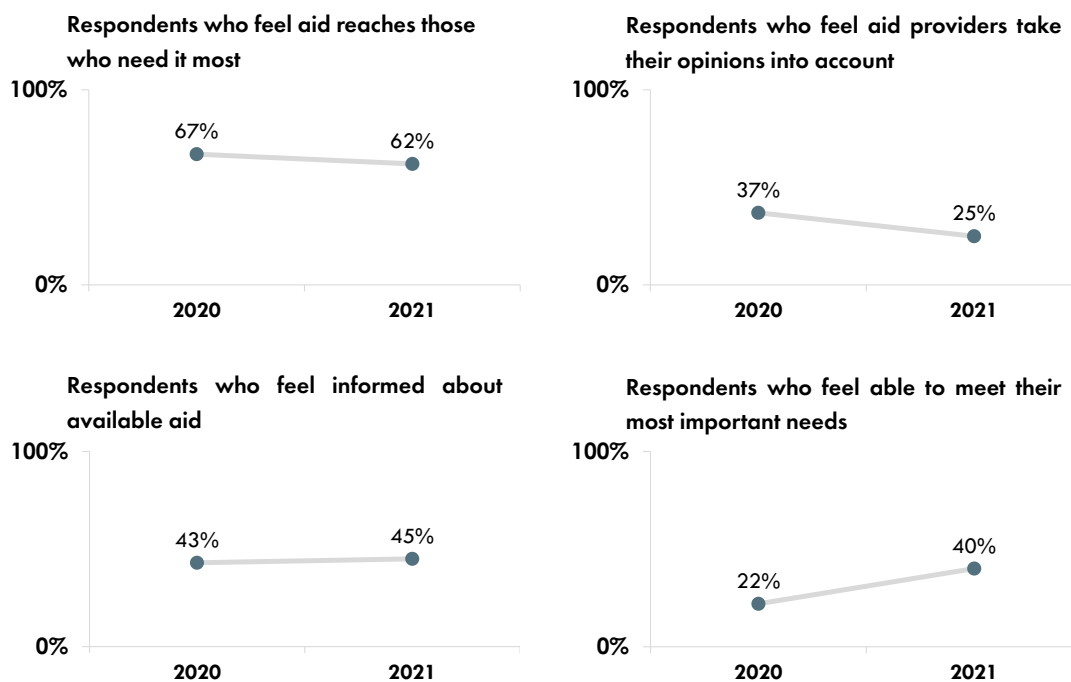
The Cash Barometer is an independent accountability mechanism that combines standardised face-to-face surveys with qualitative approaches to enable CVA recipients to provide feedback and participate in decision-making.

Supported by:



¹ UN OCHA. February 2021. "[2021 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan](#)".

time. While the 2020 sample included both in-kind and CVA recipients, the 2021 survey only focused on CVA-recipient perceptions. The severity of these changes in the targeted sample is hard to gauge based solely on the data collected. In 2020, our data pointed to a slight but consistent effect: respondents who received only in-kind assistance were slightly less positive than those who received only CVA. This difference should be considered when interpreting the time series data below.



Recommendations

We find that increased participation is a key priority for cash and voucher recipients that consistently falls short of their expectations. This is based on our survey findings and a gap analysis that contrasts the perceived importance of key accountability indicators with recipient experiences. Recipients’ lack of participation affects their awareness of key programme features, such as the duration of their cash or voucher assistance, targeting criteria, and how their transfer values are determined.

Aid providers need to improve effective participation to establish and maintain open lines of communication with aid recipients. A particular focus should be ensuring recipients know how long they will receive cash or voucher assistance. Aid providers could communicate conservative estimates where precise information is not known or depends on external funding, to ensure aid recipients can plan for a time without assistance.

We call on the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to develop an AAP strategy to address the gaps outlined in this bulletin. This strategy could help to reactivate the Community Engagement and Accountability Working Group (CEAWG) and the Collective Accountability Information Management System piloted by World Food Programme (WFP).

Across the response, roles and responsibilities for AAP need clearer definition: How will the HCT, CEAWG, individual aid providers, and donors contribute to the AAP goals stated in the HRP? And how will performance be measured against these goals to avoid the inertia felt by the respondents surveyed for this research?

Ground Truth Solutions will continue to collect quantitative and qualitative perception-based data to support the humanitarian response in 2022. We will also be inviting humanitarian staff across Somalia to participate in a series of online training sessions to explore key accountability concepts and the practical application of AAP to CVA in the coming months. We look forward to engaging with the HCT and CEAWG to support efforts to place aid recipients at the centre of decision-making.

Cash and voucher assistance in Somalia

Humanitarian needs in Somalia have grown for the last three years². Humanitarian CVA remains one of the most widely used kinds of aid to support people affected by recurring crises in the country with emergency assistance. In the first half of 2021 alone, mostly unconditional mobile money and electronic vouchers supported 1.7 million people (over 10% of the population). Cash-based assistance in Somalia includes cluster-specific programmes, multipurpose cash assistance, as well as safety nets and shock response support. The latter two were particularly effective in delivering timely and targeted assistance to people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the desert locusts in 2021.

In addition to humanitarian CVA, government-led social assistance to address poverty and vulnerability has emerged as a growing source of support for affected people. Shock-responsive safety nets like the Baxnaano programme, implemented by the Federal Government of Somalia in collaboration with WFP, provide a complement to CVA that enables a combined coverage of 2.75 million people in 2021. As social safety net transfers are projected to increase, the Cash Working Group is working toward harmonising CVA and social assistance. They are exploring possibilities for standardisation across targeting criteria, registration processes, delivery systems, feedback mechanisms, and transfer values, in coordination with relevant aid providers and donors³.

Scope and rationale

As part of the Cash Barometer initiative funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), Ground Truth Solutions spoke to 1,526 cash and voucher recipients across 15 regions and 33 districts in Somalia and Somaliland to understand their perceptions of the evolving humanitarian response. Building on the findings from the 2020 Cash Barometer survey in Somalia⁴, the survey instrument is inspired by expectation confirmation theory⁵. Models based on this theory assume that people's expectations strongly influence their satisfaction with services.

Such models have been used widely in the public sector to measure satisfaction with government services^{6,7,8}. In our adapted model, we asked CVA recipients what importance they place on certain aspects of the assistance they receive. We then asked to what extent they feel satisfied with each aspect. The aspects with wider gaps between importance and reality are identified as priorities for aid recipients and need improvement.

The purpose of this research is to provide aid providers and policymakers with perception data from CVA recipients to inform the design and implementation of the humanitarian response in Somalia and Somaliland. These findings were presented to the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group and integrated into the AAP section of the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan⁹. For additional analysis, please contact Max Seilern (max@groundtruthsolutions.org).

² UN OCHA. October 2021. "[2022 Somalia Humanitarian Needs Overview](#)".

³ UN OCHA. December 2021. "[2022 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan](#)".

⁴ Ground Truth Solutions. December 2020. "[Perception survey of aid recipients in Somalia](#)".

⁵ Oliver, Richard L. 1977. "[Effect of Expectation and Disconfirmation on Postexposure Product Evaluations: An Alternative Interpretation](#)". *Journal of Applied Psychology* 62(4): 480–86.

⁶ Morgeson, Forrest V. Apr. 2013. "[Expectations, Disconfirmation, and Citizen Satisfaction with the US Federal Government: Testing and Expanding the Model](#)". *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 23(2): 289–305.

⁷ Van de Walle, Steven. 2018. "[Explaining Citizen Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction with Public Services](#)". In *The Palgrave Handbook of Public Administration and Management in Europe*, edited by Edoardo Ongaro and Sandra Van Thiel, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 227–41.

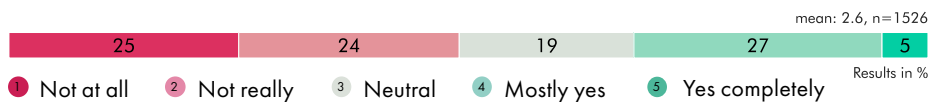
⁸ Van Ryzin, Gregg G. June 2013. "[An Experimental Test of the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory of Citizen Satisfaction](#)". *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 32(3): 597–614.

⁹ UN OCHA. December 2021. "[Accountability to Affected Populations](#)" in "[2022 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan](#)".

CVA programme details are not understood by recipients

Communication and access to information are critical to accountability¹⁰. Indeed, CVA recipients strongly emphasise communication: over 70% say it is important that aid providers communicate their plans and activities well. However, only 32% (“mostly yes” and “yes completely”) feel aid providers actually do this in their communities.

Do aid providers communicate well with you and your communities about their plans and activities?

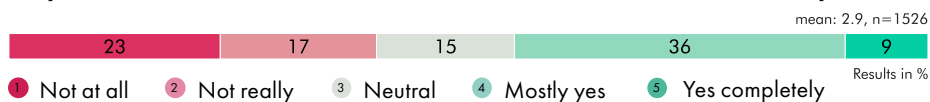


Respondents call for more direct dialogue when asked how aid providers could improve their communication. They prefer mobile phone calls (57%) and face-to-face communication (35%). The majority of cash and voucher recipients we spoke to own a mobile phone (84%) or can at least access one within their household (13%). This makes mobile phones an opportunity to communicate directly with CVA recipients. Thirty-seven percent of respondents also receive their cash assistance through their phone.

Currently, recipients report receiving information via their community leaders (41%) and aid providers (38%). Most, however, would prefer to hear directly from aid providers (58%) in order to better understand their plans and activities.

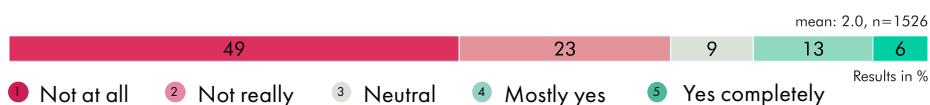
In the absence of direct communication between recipients and aid providers, less than half (45%) of those surveyed feel informed about available assistance.

Do you feel informed about the cash or voucher assistance available to you?



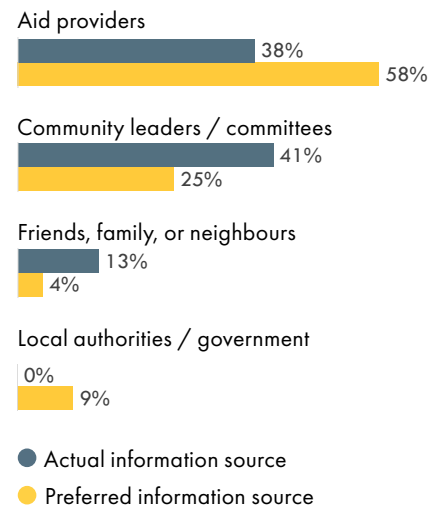
CVA recipients require more information on essential programme features. Targeting criteria, the reasons determining transfer values, and how long they will receive assistance are all largely unknown to recipients.

Do you know how aid providers decide who receives cash or voucher assistance and who does not?



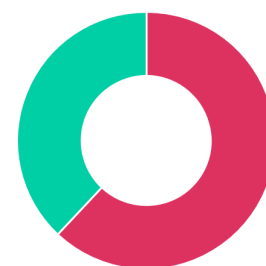
Seventy-two percent of cash and voucher recipients do not understand (“not at all” or “not really”) the targeting criteria used. Likewise, 62% do not know the duration of their assistance and 82% are unaware of how the value of their transfer was determined. To hold aid providers to account, people affected by humanitarian crises need to understand how eligibility for assistance is established. For those that qualify, understanding how the transfer value for their household is calculated and the planned duration of their assistance are essential for informed decision-making when using limited resources. As such, understanding the practical elements of their aid is important to recipients. Of all the aspects ranked by respondents throughout this survey, most value was placed on knowing how long assistance would last (87% of respondents). This was also respondents’ most frequent answer when asked what

Actual and preferred information sources*



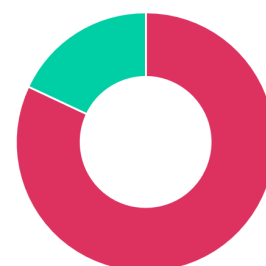
* Percentages do not total 100% as only the top 4 information sources are listed

Awareness of duration of CVA



- Aware of duration of CVA programme (38%)
- Unaware of duration of CVA programme (62%)

Awareness of how CVA amount is determined



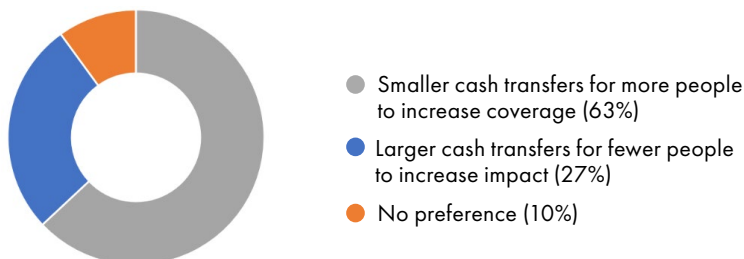
- Aware of how CVA amount is determined (18%)
- Unaware of how CVA amount is determined (82%)

¹⁰ See CHS Commitment number 4 in: CHS Alliance, Group URD and the Sphere Project. 2014. “[Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability](#)”.

information regarding their assistance they needed.

Without understanding targeting criteria, decisions over who receives aid can seem arbitrary, particularly in a context like Somalia where nearly half of the population needs humanitarian assistance¹¹. According to the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan, 7.7 million people are in need, of which 5.5 million will be targeted for assistance in 2022¹². Aid recipients call for broader coverage across the response: 63% would prefer broader coverage even if that means receiving smaller transfers.

Preference for coverage versus transfer amount



Beyond this hypothetical preference for broader coverage, 52% of recipients we spoke to say they share their assistance with people outside of their own household. This is 9 percentage points higher among voucher recipients, who may be more inclined to share goods received as part of their voucher, than among unrestricted cash recipients.

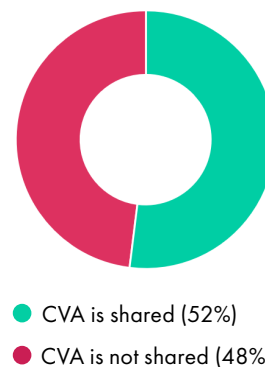
The preference for broader coverage and the tendency to share assistance underscore the value recipients place on fairness. Aid reaching those who need it most is important to 83% of the people to whom we spoke. Most recipients of cash and vouchers agree it is actually happening: 62% say the cash and voucher assistance in their community reaches those who need it most.

Does the cash and voucher assistance in your community go to those who need it most?



It should be noted that this survey is limited to recipients of cash and vouchers. Those who may have been excluded from assistance entirely probably see the distributional fairness of CVA in their communities very differently.

CVA shared with people outside of household



¹¹ UN OCHA December 2021. "Humanitarian Response Plan Somalia – Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2022".

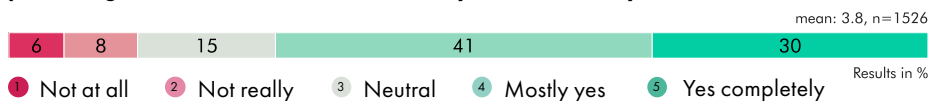
¹² Ibid

Cash and voucher recipients expect more participation and consultation

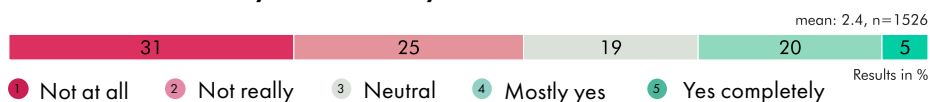
Much discussion of collective AAP in Somalia is limited to complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFMs). However, only 47% of households that have received aid in the month prior to data collection know how to make a suggestion or complaint about the humanitarian assistance they receive, according to the 2021 Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessments (JMNCA)¹³. This is down from 57% in 2020 and falls short of the HRP’s target of 70%¹⁴.

Beyond complaints and feedback mechanisms, cash and voucher recipients in Somalia and Somaliland emphasise the importance of real participation and consultation. Seventy-one percent say that having their opinions considered by aid providers is important. Likewise, 80% feel it is important that they are consulted about their needs before assistance is provided. In both cases, however, reality falls short of expectations. Only 25% of those we spoke to feel their opinions are considered by aid providers, while only 26% feel they were consulted before receiving aid. This falls short of another AAP objective in the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan to increase the proportion of respondents who feel their opinions are being taken into account from 37% to 50%¹⁵.

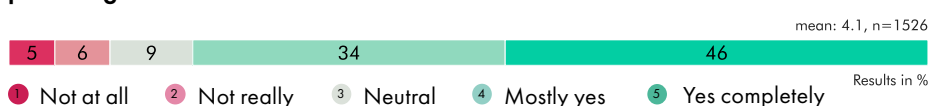
Is it important to you that aid providers take your opinion into account when providing cash or voucher assistance to your community?



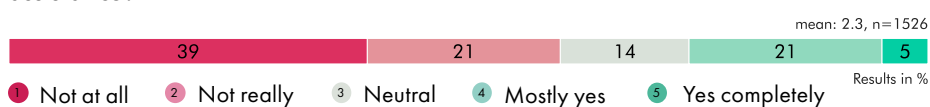
Do you feel aid providers take your opinion into account when providing cash or voucher assistance to your community?



Is it important for you that aid providers ask you about your needs before providing cash and voucher assistance?



Do aid providers consult you on your needs before providing cash or voucher assistance?



Certainly, it would be neither feasible nor necessary to consult each individual person about their preferences before providing aid. Nevertheless, aid recipients persistently feel they are not sufficiently consulted about their needs or preferences and therefore do not feel included enough in decision-making around aid.

Where respondents feel plans and activities are communicated well, they are more likely to feel consulted, and vice versa. Likewise, when recipients are consulted on their needs, they are more likely to feel that aid providers take their opinions into account.

¹³ UN OCHA. February 2021. “[2021 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan](#)”.

¹⁴ REACH. August 2021. “[Somalia Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment Results Tables](#)”.

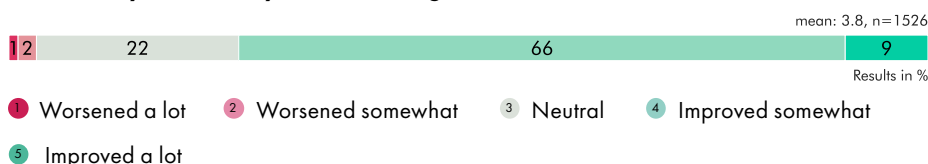
¹⁵ UN OCHA. December 2021. “[Humanitarian Response Plan Somalia – Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2022](#)”.

These correlations suggest that participation is never a binary condition that can be achieved by just consulting people on their needs. Instead, participation means ensuring people are aware of plans and activities, consulted on needs, and engaged in an ongoing and direct dialogue with aid providers.

The ability of many to meet their needs has improved in the last six months

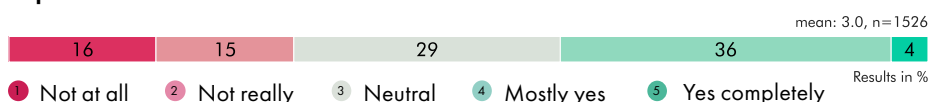
Although aid recipients may not feel sufficiently consulted, our findings show the majority report that their ability to meet their most important needs with the CVA they receive has improved over the last six months.

How has your ability to meet your most important needs with the cash or voucher assistance you currently receive changed in the last six months?



Despite exacerbating needs across in Somalia, this marks a considerable improvement to opinions voiced in 2020¹⁶. The majority of 1,533 in-kind aid and CVA recipients we spoke to as part of the Cash Barometer initiative in September 2020 felt their ability to meet their most important needs over the previous six month had either worsened somewhat or a lot. This improvement in outlook also translates to an improvement in recipients' reported ability to meet their most important needs with the cash and voucher assistance they currently receive.

Does the cash or voucher assistance you currently receive meet your most important needs?



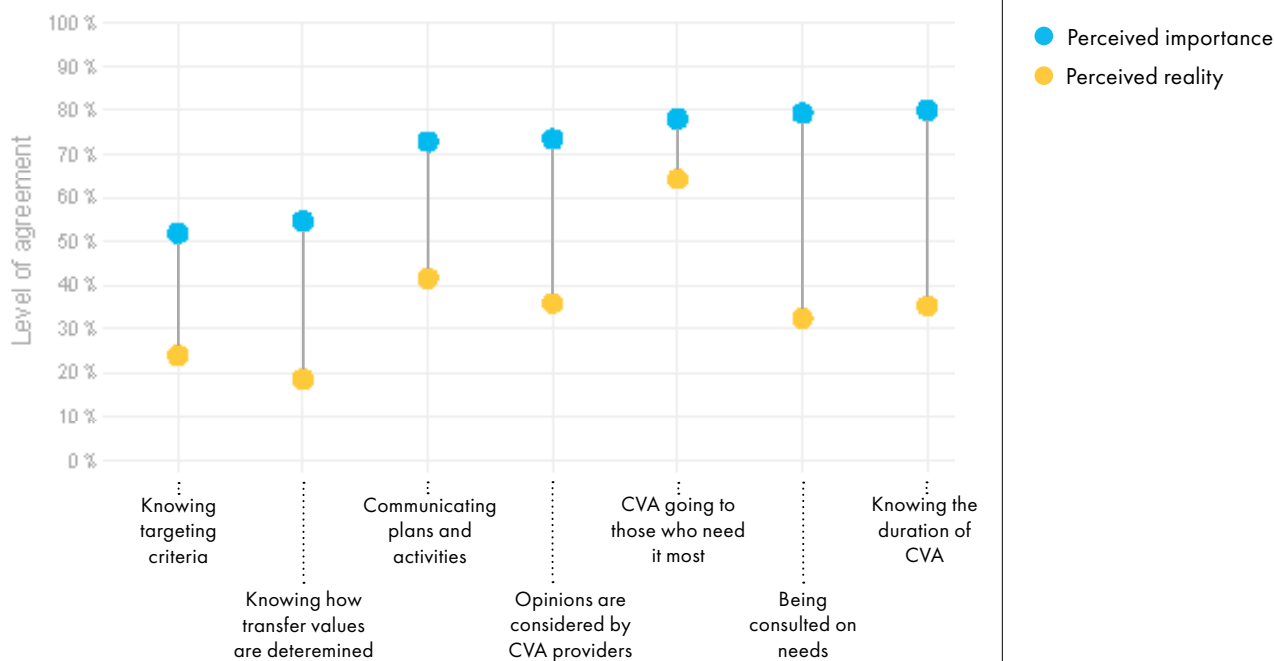
Forty percent of cash and voucher recipients feel mostly or completely able to meet their most important needs. This marks a considerable improvement to the in-kind aid and CVA recipients surveyed in 2020, most of whom (58%) felt unable to meet their most important needs to varying degrees. The top unmet needs cited in this latest round of data collection are shelter (21%), food (17%), and livelihoods (14%).

¹⁶ Ground Truth Solutions. December 2020. "[Perception survey of aid recipients in Somalia](#)".

Conclusions

To explore cash and voucher recipients' priorities for the humanitarian response in 2022, we contrasted what people care about when receiving aid with their actual experience. The graph below illustrates differences in mean scores between the perceived importance of, say, being consulted on needs, and the extent to which recipients feel this is happening. We see that, on average, knowing the duration of CVA programmes, being consulted on needs, having opinions considered by CVA providers, the communication of plans, and the fairness of CVA are considered similar in importance (marked in blue).

However, the gap between the perceived importance of these indicators and respondents' actual experience (marked in yellow) varies across indicators. When it comes to CVA going to those who need it most, the gap between importance and reality is comparatively small: recipients feel it is important that assistance targets those most in need and feel that this is happening. When it comes to being consulted on their needs and knowing how long they will receive CVA, however, the gap between the perceived importance and reality is larger: experiences fall short of expectations. This also applies to the extent to which opinions are being considered by aid providers and to providers' communication of plans and activities.



Humanitarian aid providers in Somalia must communicate with and listen better to aid recipients. Effective participation is a priority that consistently falls short of cash and voucher recipients' expectations. Compared to Ground Truth Solutions data collected in 2020, aid recipients are now less convinced their opinions are considered by aid providers.

More involvement in decision-making could improve awareness of key information that remains unclear to cash and voucher recipients. That recipients do not know how long they will receive CVA is particularly concerning. Aid providers must communicate the duration of CVA programmes to all recipients. Where this cannot be determined or depends on external funding decisions, aid providers could communicate conservative estimates to ensure aid recipients can plan for an uncertain future.

Across the response in Somalia, accountability needs more leadership and clearly defined responsibilities. AAP is relegated to “response monitoring” activities in the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and, despite the strategic objective to “uphold commitments of the centrality of protection” through AAP, there are no perception-based outcome indicators to measure performance¹⁷. The HRP merely includes an outcome indicator on the number of complaints and feedback received and responded to by individual clusters, rather than, for example, continuing to tracking the percentage of affected people who know how to provide feedback and complaints as was done in the 2021 HRP.

The lack of progress we see in our research is mirrored in response plans: many of the AAP-related goals outlined in the latest HRP 2022¹⁸ are identical to those outlined in the 2021¹⁹ HRP, with little indication of progress made so far. The goal of having “a fully functioning AAP unit within the Integrated Office in early 2021” was replaced by having “a fully functioning AAP unit within the Integrated Office at the start of 2022”²⁰. While Somalia’s deteriorating humanitarian crisis has undeniably frustrated efforts toward greater accountability, an “integrated approach to joint accountability to affected populations and their participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of protection activities” will require a more detailed action plan²¹.

An important element of such a plan could be a HCT AAP strategy to address the gaps outlined above in the first quarter of 2022. This would inform the implementation of all facets of the 2022 HRP. This strategy should include the reactivation of the CEAWG, as was recently announced by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group. This will require a renewed effort to set up and make use of the Collective Accountability Information Management System piloted by WFP. The strategy must also more clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the HCT, CEAWG, individual aid providers, and donors with respect to AAP. In particular, it could detail how each actor will contribute to the AAP goals stated in the HRP and how performance will be measured against these goals to avoid the inertia felt by the respondents to this survey.

In 2022, Ground Truth Solutions will host a series of training sessions that will explore core accountability concepts and the practical application of AAP to CVA as part of the Cash Barometer initiative. Humanitarian staff across Somalia will be invited to take part in monthly online sessions to support them in collecting, analysing, and acting on feedback by making tools and resources available to improve AAP from the ground up. We are also launching another round of independent perception data collection in July and August 2022 to support the next Humanitarian Programme Cycle. We look forward to engaging with the HCT and CEAWG to support efforts to place aid recipients at the centre of decision-making.

¹⁷ UN OCHA. December 2021. [“Humanitarian Response Plan Somalia – Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2022”](#).

¹⁸ UN OCHA. December 2021. [“Accountability to Affected Populations”](#) in [“2022 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan”](#).

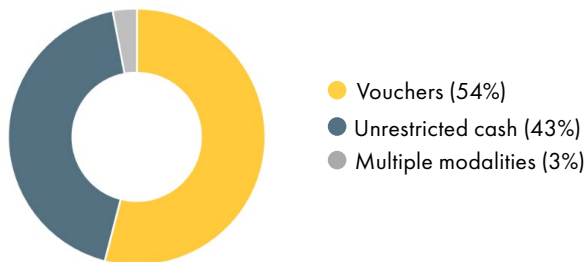
¹⁹ UN OCHA. February 2021. [“Accountability to Affected Populations”](#) in [“2021 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan”](#).

²⁰ UN OCHA. December 2021. [“2022 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan”](#).

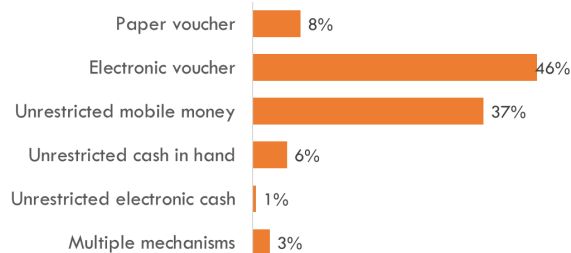
²¹ Ibid.

Demographic overview

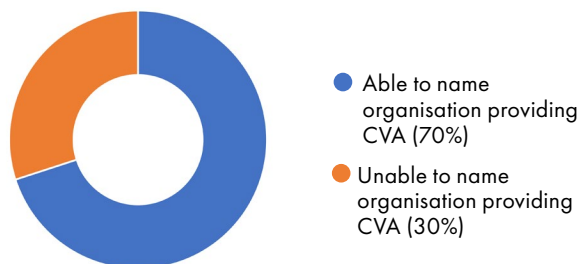
CVA modality



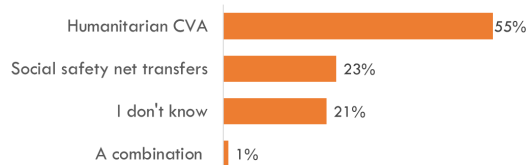
Type of delivery mechanism used



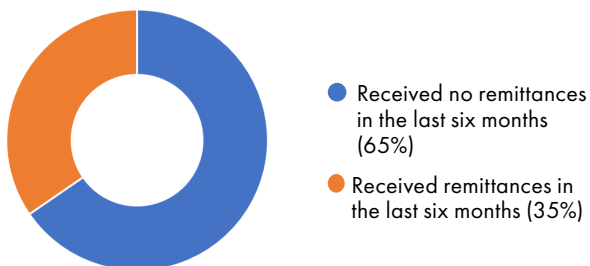
Awareness of CVA provider



Awareness of type of cash assistance received



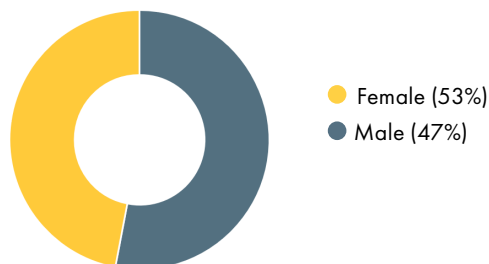
Remittances



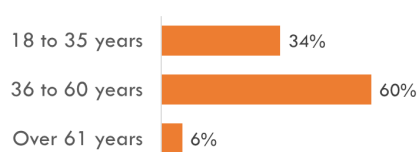
Status



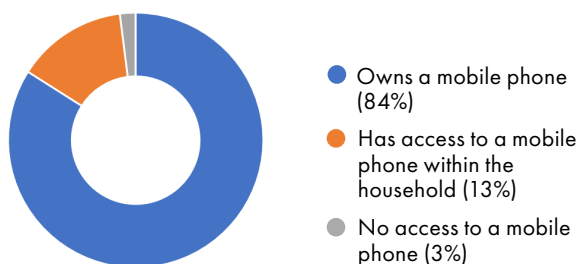
Gender



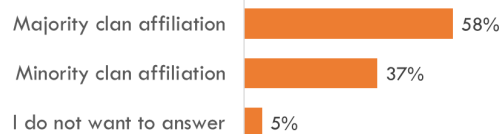
Age



Mobile phone ownership



Clan affiliation



Methodology

The sampling strategy uses the underlying data of the Somalia Cash Working Group's cash-based programming dashboard²². It was approached in two stages based on the number of cash and voucher recipients per administrative level two units. The following locations in the three different states were selected using probability proportional to size:

South Central	n=602	Somaliland	n=348	Puntland	n=576
Afmadow	45	Baki	46	Bossaso	43
Baardheere	46	Berbera	42	Burtinle	43
Banadir	47	Borama	42	Caynabo	46
Baydhaba	49	Burco	42	Ceel Afweyn	44
Belet Weyne	44	Buuhoodle	44	Ceerigaabo	46
Bulo Burto	45	Gebiley	43	Eyl	45
Diinsoor	44	Hargeysa	45	Garowe	44
Dhuusamarreeb	44	Owdweyne	44	Iskushuban	43
Doolow	44			Laas Caanood	45
Gaalkacyo	45			Laasqoray	44
Jariiban	60			Qardho	44
Jowhar	47			Taleex	43
Kismaayo	42			Xudun	46

Each selected administrative level two unit has the same sample size to ensure a self-weighting sample. Within each of these units, two randomly urban and rural areas were selected by data collection supervisors. The sample was stratified by gender (50% females, 50% males) and status. The total sample size amounted to 1,526, which allows for a 7.5% margin of error, assuming a design effect of 2.5. Margins of error for the sample of the three states are 10%, using the same design effect.

Data collection

The survey instrument was designed by Ground Truth Solutions and reviewed by the Cash Consortium and Cash Working Group. Survey questions were translated into Somalia, programmed into ONA, and reviewed by experienced enumerators working for Researchcare Africa. The survey was then piloted to ensure that the questions were comprehensible and that translations were accurate and easy to understand. Data was collected by Researchcare Africa in October 2021 via face-to-face interviews using tablets and mobile phones. Ground Truth Solutions monitored the ongoing data collection remotely and provided feedback to enumerators on a daily basis.

Enumerators employed a random selection process, according to which each subsequent respondent was selected after the enumerator had passed five houses, tents, or other types of accommodation following their interview with the previous respondent. As a result, the proportions of the various types of respondents deviated slightly from the initial target.

Demographic breakdown

We have analysed patterns in reported perceptions according to gender, age, status, and location, but we have only included differences in the analysis when each subgroup consists of a minimum percentage difference across these groups above 15%.

²² Cash Working Group. 2021. "[Cash Based Programming in Somalia](#)".

Limitations

In adapting the expectation confirmation model, we asked the importance aid recipients attach to certain aspects of aid. We did not ask their expectation. Also, we did not ask of the satisfaction of recipients with the assistance and services they receive. These adaptations of the model should not be interpreted such that importance is indicative of their levels of satisfaction or of their expectations.

All the survey respondents are CVA recipients who had received CVA over the previous six months. However, there is a fine line between CVA recipients and non-CVA recipients. Some CVA recipients, in Somalia, double as recipients of in-kind assistance. Thus, while the findings potentially reflect the perceptions of broader aid recipients, caution should be exercised in interpretation and application.



GROUND TRUTH SOLUTIONS

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