

CARE YEMEN

Program Quality Unit

Lesson Learned from the use of Cash plus in the support of Agricultural and Fishery inputs in Khanfar, Sarar and Rusad districts in Abyan Governorate



Project Name:	Multi Sector YHF Second Standard Allocation 2019 (OCHA)	
Project Duration:	Start Date: 15 Dec 2019	End Date: 30 Sept 2021
Program:	Lifesaving and Recovery Assistance Project for the conflict affected population (both IDPs and Host) in 7 districts across 4 governorates (Abyan, Hajjah, Taiz and Ibb) in Yemen.	
Donor:	YHF	
Governorate:	Abyan	
District	Khanfar, Sarar and Rusad	
Sector/type of activities	Support in the provision of agricultural and Fishery inputs and Cash Plus	
Date Lessons learned are recorded:	October 2021	



Image 1 – An agronomist educating female trainees on improved farming practices

Introduction	How does Cash Plus work?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the productive impact and sustainability of cash transfers. • Addresses immediate basic needs in addition to supporting livelihoods. • Improves the productive potential of poor and very vulnerable households. • Enables the utilization of goods and services (“plus”) as they were intended to (e.g., full engagement of the household in livelihood activities) as it prevents people to having to result to negative coping strategies.

<p>Situation</p>	<p>What is the specific situation that the lesson learned relates to?</p> <p>The seed security and fishery sector production inputs are largely affected in Yemen as a result of prolonged conflict in the country. The lack of access to these critical agricultural inputs has been attributed to the heavily weakened purchasing power. In response, CARE Yemen through Yemen Humanitarian Fund provided support to 2500 most vulnerable and food in-secured farming and fishing households with cluster-approved cereal/vegetable seeds, farm tools and fishing kits in Khanfar, Sarar and Rusad districts in Abyan Governorate. The same households receiving the production inputs were also provided with cash aid of 50\$ per month for 3 months. The cash aid also known as Cash plus was utilized by the farmers and the fisherfolk to bridge the food gap faced before a harvest.</p> <p>How is this impacted by the local context/environment/culture?</p> <p>The agricultural and fishing sector is one of the most important economic sectors in the Abyan governorate, and the main source of income for most of the people, as many of them are engaged in agriculture and fishing activities.</p> <p>Due to prolonged conflicts in Abyan, the agricultural and fishery sector has been largely impacted by lack of access to critical production inputs (seeds, tools, fuel for irrigation, fishery kits etc.) due to limited and sporadic availability and farmers’ heavily weakened purchasing power. The crisis has also caused a nearly 50% loss of agricultural workers in Yemen. As a result, it has been critical to support those who are still able to engage in agriculture.</p> <p>In this project, CARE supported the 2500 households with production inputs. Alongside these inputs, CARE also supported the households with unconditional cash known as Cash plus for three months. The cash was provided to the households in three tranches of \$50 from the time of distribution of the inputs.</p>
<p>Intervention/Action</p>	<p>Describe the action you took. Who took this action, what did you do, how and why?</p> <p>Prior to the start of the project, CARE consulted with various stakeholders that included the community, line ministries (Ministry of Fishery Resources and Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation) and the local authorities on the suitability of the project approach to the community. After the consultations, CARE identified suitable beneficiaries and registered them for the project support.</p> <p>Other preparatory activities included conducting a livelihood market assessment to enable the project to understand the market dynamics (mainly the supply and demand for) the different livelihood inputs (seeds, tools and fishery kits) that were proposed to be provided to beneficiaries’ households in the targeted districts. It was also meant to help understand the farmers preference in terms of the suitable seeds grown in the area, market information as to who are the agro dealers and other suppliers of seeds and the farming input prices.</p> <p>Other preparatory activities included community sensitization and awareness on the inclusion of female farmers into the project. CARE provide information to targeted communities about the overall objective and intended activities of the project. An emphasis was made to the community on CARE’s approach to prioritize women farmers in the appropriate agricultural activities including home gardens and production of pulses. CARE learnt that women do not participate in fishing in Khanfar district but have other roles in the fishing production chain e.g., marketing of the fish.</p>

Also identified was the extensionist in the fishing sector and agriculture. They were to be responsible in providing extension advisory services to the fisherfolk and farmers respectively.

CARE staff were responsible in coordinating and scheduling the activities as per the suitable season for each activity. CARE also facilitated the transfer of the **Cash Plus** to the fisherfolk and farmers through a financial service provider. The first **Cash Plus** disbursement, was done to coincide with the distribution of the production inputs and followed with two more disbursements per month making a total of three disbursements.

What happened as a result of your action? Was the outcome positive or negative, intended or unintended? What evidence do you have that this outcome happened as a result of your action?

The project has helped farmers and fisherfolk in Abyan to increase their agricultural and fishery productivity. Farmers and Fisherfolk have received inputs and various trainings that included improved techniques and practices on soil and fertilizer preparation and crop management, fish handling, post-harvest and marketing of their produce. Of significant importance was the cash aid the farmers and fisherfolk received to cushion them during the cropping and fishing season. The cash had a significant importance because it helped enhance the benefits of the input and training support provided by:

- Cash covered basic needs allowing HHs to better engage in productive activities and protect the assets
- Cash Plus allowed for HHs to use cash to increase food consumption without worrying about their livelihoods
- Agricultural yield increase because farmers could not resale the inputs where they had pressing needs, rather Cash Plus bridged this.
- Size of land under cultivation increase
- Trainings improved use of livelihood inputs to increase production and increase food diversity and consumption with nutritional outcomes

Outcome

Testimonials:

Khawaja Nasser

40-year-old Khawaja Nasser is the sole breadwinner for eleven family members. Khawaja works as a teacher, and during the agricultural season, she works in her five-acre land in Abyan governorate.

Thanks to the training,” says Khawaja. “We improved our knowledge on how to cultivate crops, irrigate the land, and use animal manure fertilizer as an alternative to chemical fertilizer. Applying this knowledge has improved my crops as well as my income.”

“Commercial fertilizers damage the soil,” says Khawaja. “Adopting natural farming practices makes the soil more productive and the crops fresher and healthier. I plan to expand my farm using my revenues from manure sales,” Khawaja concludes.

Ashraf Badr Saleh Sheikh

Ashraf Badr Saleh Sheikh, 40, lives in Shuqrah, a village in Khanfar District, Abyan Governorate. A father of 3 children, a university graduate, and fisherfolk, Ashraf is also head of a new committee that oversees fishing practices in his village.

“This project provided us with a set of assets, fishing net with accessories, a set of ropes, safety vest, fishing line and a warning lamp, in addition we received three instalments of \$50

	<p>cash aid for 3 months”. He also added “In the past, we were not able to fish in long distances to catch tuna, the distance was fourteen nautical miles. But in the last fishing season I was able to get a larger fishing engine that helped me reach deeper distances in the sea to catch tuna.”</p> <p>“The prices of fish that we sell in the market have become better than before, this is after we installed coolers on our boats. This has helped us to keep the fish in good quality.” Explains Ashraf.</p>
<p>Lessons learnt</p>	<p>What would you do again and why?</p> <p>The positive outcome from this project shows that it is very important to include the Cash Plus package in projects that are aimed at restoring livelihood assets to facilitate early recovery and resilience in protracted emergency contexts. The Cash Plus cushions the targeted poor and very vulnerable households to enable them improve their productive potential.</p> <p>What would you do differently and why?</p> <p>Although the Cash plus approach worked well as the amount used was predefined by FSAC without necessarily consulting with needs of farmers at the local context. However, in cases where amount is not determined by Cluster then to maximize effectiveness, the cash component of Cash Plus should be designed based on specific operational contexts, assessed needs and socioeconomic and market analyses. Identifying the appropriate type of cash transfer depends on programme objectives and duration, implementation capacity, cost, seasonality and markets, among other considerations. These will impact the frequency, duration, timing, adequate regularity and size of the cash transfers. In our case, the size and frequency of the cash transfer had been predetermined by the Food Security and Agricultural Cluster (FSAC).</p> <p>What is the key lesson that you have learned as a result of the outcome of your action?</p> <p>Scheduling of the activities that have a component of Cash Plus is very key. For example, to maximize productive impact in Cash Plus programming, cash transfers need to be made according to agricultural, fishing or pastoral seasons. All prior preparations to the start of the activities should be done in manner that will enable the targeted households to receive the cash aid alongside the other support. CARE has learnt that though Cash Plus is meant for consumption smoothing, some of the producer communities have invested some of the cash into their livelihoods.</p> <p>How does this lesson relate to strengths and weaknesses in the project’s design and implementation?</p> <p>The Cash Plus aid should be clearly thought out at the design phase. The objective of the project and the context in which the project will be implemented, the available capacity, the beneficiary preference, the implementation modality and the seasonality should be key issues to bear in mind. It is also important to carefully consider the cost–benefit analysis of inputs and services to ensure the resources required for beneficiaries to derive an income from the assistance received is not too high. For example, Cash Plus may not be appropriate for where short-cycle crop varieties are preferred. Livelihood investments that require more than three months to yield, has a better value for money to provide Cash Plus alongside the</p>

livelihood assistance. Because of the long period between investment and harvest, **Cash plus** becomes effective in bridging the needs gap and thus there is high returns in saving lives.



Image 2 - Ashraf's colleagues transporting tuna fish that they caught from high seas.