

Q&A

Question: @Samantha I'd be interested to hear more about how to deploy "green" market assessment tools.

Answer: @Samantha: In our study, we looked at the 'Cash in Emergency Toolkit' developed by IFRC & ICRC and suggested questions such as "Does the affected area have any specific environmental challenges which need to be taken into account in choosing the aid modality" or "Are suppliers willing to adopt an environment approach or improve their current environmental policies"?

Question: Has there been any publication documenting success/lessons learned from using NEAT+ in this context of CVA?

Answer: @Samantha: There has been a publication on documenting lessons learning the NEAT+. CVA updates to the NEAT+ are ongoing so we do not have any feedback yet.

Question: You mentioned on a group formed working on environmental issues. How can individuals be able to join this group. Thank you

Answer: @Samantha: The REH network is facilitated by Groupe URD. It is a francophone group and you can contact Aline Hubert, my replacement at Groupe URD (ahubert@urd.org). Here is more information: <https://www.urd.org/fr/reseau/reseau-environnement-humanitaire/> If you are an English speaker, I would suggest joining the EHA network (Environmental in Humanitarian Action network) facilitated by the Joint OCHA/UNEP unit in Geneva. More information here: <https://eectre.org/partners/the-eha-network/>

Question: Hi, the CWG of Colombia, well done! @Maria, can you share some tools for CVA programming in Environment

Answer: @Maria: We can share the Draft Checklist to pilot. To be able to make some follow up we invite you to send a mail to Ana Maria Florez Munoz florezmu@unhcr.org. Thanks for your interest.

Question: how did you prioritize the impacts? did you work on a baseline? did you take into account the national regulatory framework?

Answer: @Ana Maria: The checklist is based on the studies mentioned and considering possible impacts together with the members of Colombian Cash Working Group. It's focusing on the processes in the CVA-Cycle and helping the CVA-Actors to identify possible sources of environmental impact. Obviously, CVA Actors are invited to take into account national regulatory frameworks which vary between countries and contexts.

Question: Is the UNHCR-CVA environmental checklist complementary to the NEAT+ tool?

Answer @Ana Maria: Yes, the checklist focuses on processes of the CVA-Program Cycle and is complementary to the NEAT+ Tool

Question: It's fantastic to hear that Colombia is looking into the environmental impacts of CVA! Would it be possible to share the checklist with webinar members? Also did I hear correctly from Samantha that there were no positive environmental impacts from CVA that was identified or found through the research? I am not sure that cash for work and conditionality are the only ways of making CVA environmentally friendly, e.g. I wonder if perhaps humanitarian actors need to invest more in community sensitization about the impacts of climate change etc. in their communities and daily lives etc.? Thanks for the presentations and Q+A!

Answer: @Samantha: I agree with you Paul. However, in a context of a global environmental and climate crisis, I think humanitarian actors need to take their responsibility and use safeguards to limit their impact as in turn has incidence of humanitarian needs and community's resilience. A suggestion is to use conditionality in specific contexts where environmental fragilities are the most significant.

Question: To what extent is the excellent work being presented here integrated with work on the environmental impacts of cash transfers and social protection systems in developmental (rather than humanitarian) contexts?

Answer @José: There are increasingly more studies about CVA and social protection being used to prepare, mitigate and respond to climate related shocks. It is an exciting topic and for sure we will try to bring this into the discussion.

Question: so far, all presentations are recommending restricted or conditional modalities to ensure potential environmental impact while most of the main donors are today pushing for non-conditional and non-restrictive modalities (promoting dignity, empowerment etc.). How do you think that this ambivalence can be addressed specially when there are very few evidences linking CVA & Environment?

@José: applying conditionalities and restrictions to CVA is related to program design and needs to be carefully considered in each case. Assuming that restrictions/conditionalities is the only way forward is probably a mistake and going against beneficiaries' dignity and preference. We need to 1) strengthen the evidences about CVA environmental impacts –in its different forms- and 2) look for innovative programming approaches (including complementary programming) that are not undermining all the progress we have made in the terms of pushing for a multipurpose cash assistance. Including hard restrictions and conditionality to aid recipients is like saying that climate change and environment degradation is mainly their fault. This is strongly discussable.

@Irene: most of the Cash and Vouchers assistance that we are providing in the early action is unconditional. It has a lot of do with what is feasible, what communities prefer, there are quite a lot of factors.

@Samantha: conditions and restrictions could be applied when high environmental risks are identified.

Question: I still hear cash and social protection professionals referring to the cash and environment debate using the premise that if environmental considerations limit totally free choice by cash recipients, then environment cannot be considered. Effectively “free choice will always trump environment” – meaning that any conditionalities or use of vouchers cannot be considered. What is your opinion of this (supposed) dichotomy and how can humanitarian agencies and donors ensure that environment is considered in cash and social protection responses?

Answer: @José: I believe this dichotomy is more in the discourse level than in reality. Environment need to be considered in programming as well as other key elements are. CVA provides the flexibility to adapt

to people vulnerabilities and context specificities, including considering conditionality and restrictions to the use of cash when is really needed. But this need to be strongly justified in terms of protecting affected populations from environmental risks. As we saw, multipurpose cash in anticipatory actions could really have a positive impact in protecting affected populations from climate shocks.

Question: - I am wondering whether we have any Quantifiable evidence that CVA resulted on environment.

Answer: @Ana María: Due to the lack of detailed information on the environmental impacts generated by the different distribution mechanisms, it is recommended to invest in a more exhaustive study comparing the environmental impact of the mechanisms.

Question: Surely digital cash transfers are more environmentally friendly than paper vouchers, cash in hand, cheques, cards etc.? I did not hear if this is the case from the presenters today.

Answer: @Samantha: I do not totally agree, because any digital transaction costs energy and can be quantified in terms of CO2. so, it is better we start factoring this aspect now rather than discovering in some years that cash has caused tons of co2 emissions.

- * one idea could be including in the response design a system to offset all the known impacts through a set of dedicated programme.

- * It's a very a tricky question. Most probably without a clear answer by now, especially considering the arguments of Livio. Nevertheless, digitalization may have an additional positive effect as transport requirements and needs to meet in person might reduce thanks to use of digitalization.

Question: Are there any case studies on the "greening of the supply chain" and incentives provided? Where this has happened in tandem with labelled MPC to encourage purchasing from greener suppliers?

@Samantha: there are many examples of greening the supply chain, and the Joint Initiative for Humanitarian Packaging Waste is currently working on this (a mapping of policies and practices with regards to sustainable supply chain). <https://eecentre.org/2019/07/15/https-www-eecentre-org-2019-07-15-sustainable-humanitarian-packaging-waste-management/>

Question: Is there any specific example of a good experience in Colombia with some supplier or partner improving the implementation of the projects including this approach and the impact on the beneficiaries?

Answer: @Ana Maria: Now we are piloting the checklist. WFP is updating some messages and some tool (PDM) with the criteria that we recommended in the tool. In august or September we will get feedback about the pilot and we could give you more examples. My mail is florez@unhcr.org, if you want send an email and we could keep in touch.

Question: How is the checklist differ from NEAT+ ?

Answer: They complement each other as NEAT+ is focusing on sector approaches as Shelter, WASH, Livelihoods. CVA is not a sector as such and can be applied in any sector. The checklist focuses on identifying possible environmental impacts in the CVA Project Cycle.

Question: Sorry, but cannot we put conditionality on us as humanitarian stakeholder (according to our mechanism, logistic value chain, office, ...) and keep the dignity of choice to our cash beneficiaries?

Answer: @Jose: Totally agree, CVA provides enough flexibility to make sure that restrictions/conditionalities are not the only solution. Analyzing better Cash impact in different contexts (from the environment/climate change perspective) and explore Cash in preparedness, linkages with social protection and complementary programming.

Question: what would you say the current main gap in understanding is that requires more research or testing? What in your opinion is the priority area for further research?

Answer: @Samantha: I think further research is required to supporting humanitarian organization in how to calculate the carbon footprint of CVA

Question: I believe the unconditional cash transfer will give more flexibility to realize environmental impacts. However, given the anticipatory actions forecast based cash intervention, how we can ensure sustainability of the approach in the context of recurrent shocks and stressors including rapid and slow-onset hazard impacts?

Answer: @Irene: Anticipatory action shouldn't be use it in Silo but within the Disaster Risk Management framework, addressing the highest level of risk in a very short period of time: 48hours, 3 days, 5 days. framework. Meaning that anticipatory actions by itself is it not embedded in the DRM framework is not sustainable.