

9th December 2020 Cash Hub Webinar Summary Points

Topic: Early Action using CVA

Speaker	Summary Takeaways
<p>David Dalgado, Cash Hub team, British Red Cross</p>	<p>Opening to early action using CVA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing cash pre-crisis can be very important in supporting households to take the necessary steps to reduce the impact of a disaster. • It can cover the costs associated with evacuation, stop the sale of key assets or allow people to protect their homes and livelihoods. • Although the components of a programme utilising cash are similar, whether undertaken pre or post crisis. If using cash for early action, i.e. pre-crisis, then it is important that all the cash preparedness activities have taken place. The main difference is that with Anticipatory Humanitarian Action, we do not know when or where we will respond, not until several days before the forecasted event. • This will include pre-contracting Financial Service Providers and awareness of the know-your-customer (KYC) requirements and their impact on programming in advance. • It will also include knowing exactly how targeting will work, being able to undertake registration and verification as quickly as possible, and having well-defined transfer values. • To support Early Action using CVA, National Societies will have an Early Action Protocol (EAP) in place. National Society have strong trained volunteer on quick beneficiaries data collection through KoBo and ODK. This protocol will set out the process, command chains, the actors and budget that will enable swift CVA to be delivered pre-crisis. • Key to facilitating all is having predictable funding of early actions which is where Forecast-Based-Financing (FbF) comes in.
<p>Mohammad Shahjahan (Saju), Assistant Director & Project Coordinator, FBF Project, Bangladesh Red Crescent</p>	<p>Early Action & CVA – Flood Response, Bangladesh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 2015 to 2020 the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) implemented cash for early action 4 times. • In 2020 Bangladesh has faced emergencies related to COVID19, cyclones and flooding. The BDRCS predicted around 4.11 million people would be affected by these three crises and engaged in targeting the most vulnerable populations ahead of time. The Early Action Protocol, EAP activation and implementation process is governed by two committees within the BDRCS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Activation Committee - The Implementation Committee • These two committees oversee the EAP implementation process of risk assessment, identification of forecasts, definition of impact levels, selecting early actions, development of the EAP, validation of the EAP, monitoring of forecasts and the triggering of the EAP. With respect to selecting the early actions (such as using CVA) this was from our community engagement with disaster-prone communities, local government and other local institutions.

	<p>Flood 2020 Early Action Timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From the 1st June the BDRCS began forecast flood monitoring.• On the 25th June NS staff were deployed as part of the pre-activation trigger to the area of concern to monitor the situation and commence collecting data on households (HH).• On the 28th June the BDRCS activated the EAP, with funds being transferred to the Bangladesh Post Office on the 29th June.• By the 1st July the first cash distributions had begun in Jamalpur, using mobile money transfer (through the Bangladesh Post Office).• By the 4th of July the districts of Gaibandha and Kurigram had both also received their cash distributions.• BDRCS also provided support for evacuation as early actions• The funds transferred were for evacuation assistance.• The BDRCS was able to complete all their early actions support by the 4th July. There was a lessons learnt workshop on the 5th July, all before the flood peak on the 18th July. <p>Phases of Forecast based Actions (FbA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are two phases of forecast based actions, these include the following activities: Phase I: Pre- Activation<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Allocation of resources in the 3 flood prone districts- Training and orientation of staff and volunteers- Identification of the beneficiaries likely to be impacted based on the forecasted exposed areaPhase II: Activation<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Activation of FbA by DREF- Disbursement of fund through Bangladesh Post Office and RC Units for unconditional Cash grant and evacuation support for beneficiaries <p>Undertaking CVA for Early Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Below are some of the activities the BDRCS engaged with in order to select CVA as the response option of choice for early actions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Questionnaire survey- Community consultation- Key-informant interview (KII) survey- Market survey• They also completed the following activities to ensure a timely CVA response:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Signed agreement with Bangladesh Post Office (this overcomes some of the know-your-customer, KYC, requirements of other financial service providers, FSPs).- Coordinate with local government- Coordinate with World Food Programme (WFP)- Coordinate with the Bangladesh Flood Warning and Forecast Centre (FFWC)- Coordinate with Cash Working Group
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	<p>BDRCS then completed the following early actions once the EAP has been activated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mobilized volunteers- Household data collection for beneficiary selection- Distributed unconditional cash grant 3800 of the most vulnerable HHs, BDT. 4500/HH (approx. 50 USD)- Total 1,71,00,000 BDT has been distributed among the beneficiaries.- Provided evacuation support- Ensuring continued support in the context of COVID19 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The response covered 3 districts, 7 Upazilas and 19,000 people. In all three districts the cash distributions were completed at least 14 days in advance of the flood peak, the flood itself lasted around 26 days. <p>Coordination and Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The following coordination activities took place to ensure the successful implementation of the EAP:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Development of Anticipatory Action (AA) proposal with the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)- MoU with WFP for implementation of AA under CERF- Ministry of Distaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), Department of Disaster Management (DDM), Bangladesh Flood Warning and Forecast Centre (FFWC) and Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD)- Coordination with Bangladesh Post Office- Maintain close coordination at national and local levels goverment authorities- In Bangladesh BDRCS leads the Forecast-based Action (FbA) working Group and ensured presence and coordination with Humanitarian Coordintion and Task Team (HCTT), Needs Assessment Working Group (NAWG), Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners, and other sectors & clusters <p>Success of Forecast-based Actions (FbA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The BDRCS have identified several key successes in the implementation of FbA. These include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Shifting to a more flexible/ nationwide approach (from a pre-selected communities approach)- Mainstreaming BDRCS efforts with Government FbA- Wider stakeholders' involvement in the BDRCS' FbA activities- Strong partnership and coordination with Government and other stakeholders (WFP, CARE, HCTT, NAWG, CARE, Start FUND, UNFPA, UNDP)- Establishment and leading of FbA working group- Using Impact-based forecasting (IBF) for identifying intervention- Jointly organised National Dialogue Platform-NDP
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	<p>Challenges of FbA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, the implementation of FbA within the BDRCS was not without its challenges, these included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beneficiary selection within short span of time (2-3 days) was a significant challenge for the teams on the ground - Completing cash transfer within 1-2 days of EAP activation is difficult - Reaching the most remote locations in limited time was hard, especially in the Char area - Poor availability of functional mobile network in targeted locations - The response relied on the accuracy, reliability and dissemination of the forecast. - Continued constraints were placed on the programme team as a result of the COVID19 pandemic situation. • We were able to overcome all of these challenges due to work undertaken in preparation. We have strong and well trained staff and volunteers, proven transfer mechanism through the Bangladesh post-office and there has been significant coordination with other partners.
<p>Fredrick Orimba, Cash Programme Officer, Kenya Red Cross</p>	<p>Early Action & CVA – Drought Response, Kenya</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) works hand in hand with government agencies which monitor the weather and climate, using the forecasting Vegetation Condition Index (VCI) to determine the potential drought scenarios. These agencies have confirmed a strong likelihood of drought next year for parts of Kenya and the KRCS has begun working on EAP to prepare for an early response. <p>EAP Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last drought response, KRCS implemented Early Action activities ranging from market analysis (since we anticipated using Cash, we had to understand the markets functionality and how the markets would be affected by the eminent drought), including assessing existing payments systems, engaging in Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) in the ASAL counties of Kenya (forecasted to be impacted) to determine community preference, revising FSP agreements, working with Kenya Cash Working Group to discuss the Household Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) from where cash transfer value is determined for all responses in the country, and assessments to monitor the unfolding drought situation. • In addition, KRCS worked with the IFRC on DREF funding for EAP. • The KRCS also contacted communities to warn of the oncoming drought, promoting activities such as vaccination of animals and selling of livestock before the drought hits, initiated peace talks between communities to prevent resource related conflict. (there has been a trend of community conflict over resources during

	<p>times of drought) to prevent community conflict in situations of resource scarcity.</p> <p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the KRCS did receive funding for EAP drought response it was not enough to meet all the initially identified needs. • However, those who were supported with CVA from the KRCS were able to refrain from engaging in negative coping mechanisms in response to the drought. • Another example of the impact is continued school attendance of children in supported HH, where normally emergency situations such as drought would result in them being pulled out from school. • The KRCS is currently working on additional drought EAP activities to ensure that they have sufficient funds in the future to support households in crises in advance. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the major challenges for KRCS was in terms of getting communities, donors to understand the concept of early action and the need for early action. So for example, there was some resistance when KRCS was saying that we are heading into drought and we need funds to support Early Action. In fact KRCS was being mocked for saying we were heading into drought. And then a few months later when we were in full drought the same people were saying “oh the Red Cross was right”. • There is really a need to advocate for early actions and put resources into early actions. • When we identified the most vulnerable through the assessment process we raised expectations, and then we did not receive all the funding and were not able to deliver all the tranches of support. So there were some people who were disappointed. So in future we must be even more careful with our communication until funding is confirmed.
<p>Anita Auerbach, Cash-based Early Action & Social Protection, German Red Cross</p>	<p>Impact-based forecasting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a growing number of agencies, including IFRC, START Fund, WFP, FAO, and OCHA, who are implementing EAP in response to hazards such as hurricanes, volcanoes, conflict, cyclone/typhoon, food insecurity, drought, floods, disease and coldwave. • The Anticipation Hub hosts a map of this information through which you can see some of the country EAP profiles. The list of countries is constantly growing. <p>EAP development and activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evolution of EAP is a multi-year process, it can take two to three years to setup, and involves testing the activation, piloting testing, collaborative lessons learnt with actors involved, reporting, updating and reevaluating the EAP protocol. • The position of ‘no regrets’ should be taken with EAP. So this means that it is better to trigger the early action response when

	<p>the forecast is showing the early action should be triggered and then if the event does not occur not regretting. So go through the process and don't potentially put lives and livelihoods at risk.</p> <p>Impact-based forecasting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The selection of early action intervention areas is based on an impact-based forecasting analysis that combines the forecast data and a risk map.• The can involve a range of institutions at a local, regional, international level (e.g. the RCRC Climate Centre). Communities, local authorities, governments, national institutions.• Overlaying this data will result in an intervention map that provides information of where and when the predefined early action could potentially be implemented. <p>Philippines Typhoon EAP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An example of from the Philippines demonstrates the different activities included in EAP:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Readiness activities included preparation of visibility products and forms- Prepositioning with the warehousing of shelter strengthening kits- Early actions including: Installation of shelter strengthening kits; early harvesting of matured crops like Abaca trees, rice or corn depending on the target region; evacuation of people, their assets and livestock to safety; and cash for work for early harvesting, shelter strengthening and evacuation of livestock and assets. Cash for Work (CfW) has been chosen here because it has been found to be the fastest way to get cash into communities in this context. The CfW is for the harvesting and the shelter strengthening.• This gets triggered when the statistical model of the Netherlands Red Cross 510 initiative shows a forecast of 10% of houses damaged in 3 municipalities. <p>Main differences with regular projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Time and place of the response unknown- Registration & distribution occurs prior to a disaster- Financial Service Providers (FSP) are contracted ahead of time- The transfer value is pre-defined- Early market analysis must take place beforehand - and you must have experience to know that there will be markets functioning no mater what the hazard, and understand what the impact might be on the markets.- Coordination structures pre-established, with pre-agreed MoUs etc.- Short timeframe for encashment/distribution (we often need this to occur in a day or two of transfer to the FSP). <p>RCRC Guidelines</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are a range of resources and guidance available to RCRC Movement practitioners wanting to engage with EAP.• The Cash Hub platform hosts the Cash in Emergencies Toolkit and has a new page on Cash and Social Protection with resources developed by a new Movement Technical Working Group on Cash and Social Protection (in 2021 this group will also work on developing more resources on early actions and social protection).• The newly launched the Anticipation Hub hosts the Forecast based Financing Practitioners Manual (which includes chapters on cash-based early actions and social protection. This manual is going to be reviewed and expanded over the course of 2021 and we will love your feedback if you have used it. My contact: A.Auerbach@drk.de• IFRC and the ICRC are members of the Grand Bargain sub-working group linking Humanitarian CVA with Social Protection (IFRC is a co-chair). <p>Linking Early Action CVA and Social Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some of the biggest cash transfers come from the government, and we have seen with COVID-19 a big increase in government programmes to deliver CVA to their people and this can tell us how shock-responsive their systems are, where gaps remain, and where we can potentially support. COVID has seen governments include responding to people who are not part of normal social protection systems, i.e. millions of urban, informal workers.• Supporting the links between Early Action CVA and government social protection programmes, which can be large scale (in comparison to humanitarian programmes) provides the only sustainable exit strategy for humanitarian agencies.
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Prepared by Cara Wilson, Cash Hub based on what was said in the Webinar and the takeaways may not reflect the top takeaways of the speaker as they see them.