

4.7 Cash-feasibility agenda

One purpose of EMMA is to help humanitarian managers to decide where cash-based interventions are an appropriate component of emergency response. This decision has both analytical and operational aspects. From a market-analysis perspective, in Steps 8 and 9 you will assess the market system's capacity to respond to the extra demand that cash would stimulate. From an operational perspective, if cash programmes look like a distinct possibility, it is important to include questions (see Box 4.2) about their operational feasibility in the EMMA fieldwork agenda.

Box 4.2 'Operational' questions about cash feasibility

Needs and preferences

- To what extent did women and men depend on cash before the shock?
- What strategies are households using to cope with food or income insecurity?
- Do emergency-affected populations have a preference for cash or in-kind approaches?

Social relations (power differences within households and the community)

- Do men and women have different priorities?
- How is control over resources managed within households?
- What are the differences within the community in terms of control over resources?
- What impact will cash distributions have on existing social and political divisions?

Policy

- What is government policy regarding use of cash-based interventions?

Security and delivery mechanisms

- What are the options for delivering cash to people?
- Are banking systems or informal financial transfer mechanisms functioning?
- What are the risks of cash benefits being taxed or seized by elites or warring parties?
- How do these risks compare with the risks posed by in-kind alternatives to cash?

Corruption

- What are the risks of cash being diverted by local elites or project staff?
- How do these compare with the risks of providing in-kind alternatives?
- What accountability safeguards are available to minimize these risks?

Intervention history

- Have any cash-based interventions been implemented previously in the area?
- What was the outcome? Were there any particular problems? Or positive recommendations from the experience?

Source: Creti and Jaspars, 2006