

EVALUATION IN ACTION: Assessing the Impact of Cash Transfers and Water Filters on Food and Water Security in Guatemala

HAEC-Funded Impact Evaluation



Photo Credit: Etimosa Yvonne / Save the Children

Background

Guatemala is highly vulnerable to climate change related disasters, such as floods and droughts. In particular, in the Totonicapán, San Marcos, and Alta Verapaz departments, people are frequently affected by climate-related disasters, as well as limited access to safe water resources. Multiple shocks lead to livelihood disruptions, reduced planting areas, food scarcity, asset and crop losses, and inadequate nutrition access. For many, this leads to negative coping strategies, such as atypical migration and increased sale of productive assets.

To address these challenges, World Vision, funded by USAID/Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), is implementing the Assistance for Change and Economic Growth for Food Security (Asistencia para el Cambio y Crecimiento Económico por la Seguridad Alimentaria, ACCESO) activity. The program aims to enhance food security for 3,300 vulnerable families by responding to various factors, including fluctuating food prices, rising agricultural costs, the COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change impacts in remote communities. Additionally, given its relevance to health and nutrition, World Vision aims to ensure access to clean drinking water for all program participants.

Evaluation Overview

To inform future programming at World Vision on national, regional, and even global scales, the team was interested in conducting an impact evaluation on this program. Specifically, World Vision is conducting a cluster randomized control trial (cRCT), funded by Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle (HAEC), to better understand the use of cash transfers on food security and water filters on drinking water quality in rural Guatemala. The primary research questions for the evaluation are:

What is the impact of the **cash transfers** component of the intervention on food security? What is the impact of the water filter component of the intervention on fecal contamination of household drinking water.

Navigating Evaluation Constraints

The short duration and rapid start-up of most humanitarian activities pose significant challenges for impact evaluations, as stakeholders question how to execute a compelling study design and set up research within a limited implementation window. This was World Vision's primary challenge in designing this impact evaluation.

To address this challenge, during the research design stage, HAEC proposed modifying the design to eliminate the need for a baseline in both control and intervention villages, aiming to address the challenges posed by a timeline constraint. World Vision opted to do this, modifying their project baseline process to make it more efficient by administering it to just the intervention households.

Quick Facts

TITLE

Assessing the Impact of Cash Transfers and Water Filters on Food Security in Guatemala

TYPE OF EVALUATION

Impact Evaluation

EVALUATION METHODS

Cluster Randomized Control Trial

EVALUATION ARMS

- 1. Treatment Group:** 1,142 program participant households
- 2. Control Group:** 730 households not participating in the program

COUNTRY

Guatemala

DONORS

USAID/BHA

PARTICIPANTS

3,300 families

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

World Vision

EVALUATION/RESEARCH PARTNERS

World Vision, HAEC



A more extensive follow-up survey in both control and intervention households was then designed, with a wider range of sociodemographic indicators unlikely to be impacted by the intervention, in order to assess comparability between intervention and control households and better understand the causal effects of the intervention. This ensured both the programmatic and study-specific data being collected can inform the impact evaluation, in order to save time and money. This approach successfully balances maintaining research rigor and meeting the project's time-sensitive goals.

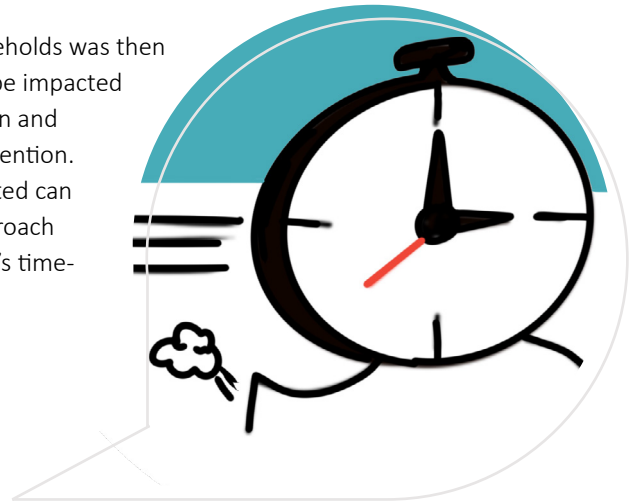
Evaluation Purpose & Audience

This study will provide evidence on whether cash transfers that are strategically timed with a vulnerable time of year impact food security in the short-term, as well as medium-term. The study will also provide evidence on whether the addition of water filters can increase access to safe drinking water and whether impacts can be sustained. The findings from this study will contribute to the evidence base for these intervention components delivered within a multi-sectoral program and will inform future emergency food security activities in humanitarian settings within Guatemala and beyond.

Context and What's Next

In March 2023, a list of study villages were randomly allocated to intervention or control status. From April-June 2023, the ACCESO team registered households deemed eligible in the intervention villages. The eligibility assessment and registration data will serve as the baseline data for the study. The team distributed the first cash transfer in July 2023, which continued monthly until October 2023. Households received water filters in October-November 2023. From November to January, the team enrolled intervention and control households into the cRCT study and collected the first round of surveys to measure food security and drinking water quality. The team will conduct a second round of surveys and water quality testing in April-May 2024 to assess medium-term impacts of the cash transfer and water filter intervention.

For further information, contact Dr. Miles Kirby, Senior Research Specialist, at mkirby@worldvision.org or visit www.worldvision.org.gt to learn more about World Vision's programs in Guatemala.



Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle

This brief is brought to you by the [Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle \(HAEC\)](#) Associate Award. HAEC works to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency food security activities funded by the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) by increasing the use of cost-effective and timely impact evaluations in humanitarian contexts.

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This brief is part of HAEC's Evaluation in Action series highlighting ongoing impact evaluations from around the world. Do you have an ongoing impact evaluation in a humanitarian context that you want to share?



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