



Cash Giving - intellectual context and rationale

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Why have we chosen to focus on no-strings attached cash?

The climate crisis is the most urgent crisis humanity faces. It is not just an environmental crisis, but a humanitarian one. After the energy sector, land use change contributes around 25% of global emissions, and half of this can be attributed from deforestation and forest degradation, emitting between five and ten GtCO₂e each year (IUCN, 2021). This is driven by the increasing pressures of Western consumerism and capitalism. The rainforest provides 23% of the mitigation potential to halt runaway climate change by 2030 (WRI, 2018). Cool Earth exists to radically reduce the contribution of rainforest destruction to the climate crisis. To do this we are

constantly seeking efficient solutions. We have therefore made the decision to expand our work on cash giving – providing no-strings attached cash to communities in rainforest – making it the central focus of our programmatic work.

Cool Earth has given cash to rainforest communities since its inception in 2007 in the form of communal grants to community associations. From 2012 these grants were conditional upon the signing of a conservation agreement, but we have found that such agreements are obsolete in reality, and sanctions have not been imposed. Building on our experience of cash giving to rainforest communities, and the strong arguments that indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) are the best protectors of rainforest, we are expanding this programme and trialling removing the requirement for a conservation agreement. The objective of this is to test the hypothesis that when given cash with no restrictions, communities are better able to continue living in their forests and in doing so protect their rainforest and its carbon stores, whilst removing the restrictions that result in rainforest communities being dispossessed and discriminated against by conservation.

Climate change is a large and multi-faceted problem, and there is no single solution (Bennet et al., 2021). Cool Earth focuses on protection of rainforest as one means of fighting climate change within a broad portfolio of valuable mitigation methods. Cool Earth recognises that protecting rainforest as a climate change mitigation solution is critical for the health of life on Earth, but there has not yet been a widely adopted solution enabling significant rainforest protection, so there is an urgency to find efficient, impactful solutions. Therefore, we have decided to focus on the approach to protecting forest in which we feel that we have the most experience, the most room for impact and the greatest opportunity for scaling globally. By narrowing our focus in this way we can be an effective part of the larger tapestry of climate change mitigation.

So, what is the supporting evidence behind our renewed focus, and how can we be sure that this is the best approach for us to take? Below we outline the evidence for the strength of IPLCs in conservation, existing practices related to cash payments in conservation and in other fields to demonstrate why we believe that this is an effective and just way to approach rainforest conservation and climate change mitigation.

Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) are critical climate change stakeholders

The belief that indigenous peoples and local communities are best placed to sustainably manage their forests is one of the foundation stones on which our cash giving work rests. Whilst IPLCs comprise less than 5% of the world's population, they manage or have rights to at least 37 million kilometres squared of land (Garnett et al., 2018). Within this, at least 24 percent (54,546MtC) of above ground carbon stored in tropical forests is managed by IPLCs, equivalent

to close to four times global greenhouse gas emissions in 2014 (World Resources Institute, 2016; Cornered by PAs, website¹). Whilst already very significant, this is likely to be an underestimation of carbon stored in collective lands in the tropics, as data is not available for all territories traditionally inhabited by IPLCs (WRI, 2016). There is therefore no avoiding the fact that IPLCs are key stakeholders in climate change mitigation.

A rapidly growing body of research indicates that IPLCs have historically managed their forests at least as sustainably as other forms of management including protected areas (Tauli-Corpuz, Alcorn and Molnar, 2018; Ricketts et al., 2010; FAO/FILAC, 2021). Further supporting this, research indicates that community-owned forests and local decision making are linked to lower carbon emissions than other forms of management, including government ownership (Chhatre and Agrawal, 2009; Tauli-Corpuz, Alcorn and Molnar, 2018; Stevens et al., 2014). Cool Earth's own research (Proctor, 2020) also supports this, finding that the carbon stocks of forests managed by IPLCs have either remained stable or increased over time. These carbon stocks are not maintained by fencing off these forests as a pristine wilderness, but instead by ensuring their consistent use according to sustainable practices, harnessing the natural ability of forest areas to regenerate from certain forms of disturbance such as well-managed shifting agriculture (Proctor, 2020; Padoch and Pinedo-Vasquez, 2010). Whilst this is not a field where it is possible to clearly delineate between correlation and causation, a study by Blackman and Veit (2018), considered forest loss in the territories of IPLCs and those under other forms of management and controlled for confounding factors – such as indigenous territories being more remote or having more challenging topography for forest exploitation than other areas – and still found that the territories of IPLCs sustained lower levels of forest loss than others².

In order to achieve the sustainable management results outlined above, IPLCs have been shown to be significant investors in conservation in their own right. A study in 2018 estimated that globally IPLCs were investing USD\$3.16 billion-4.57 billion in conservation actions, equivalent to between 16-23 percent of the amount spent by governments, donors, foundations and NGOs combined on conservation, with the majority of these investments being made by IPLCs in the Global South (Tauli-Corpuz Alcorn and Molar, 2018³).

Despite their track record of effective sustainable management indigenous people and local communities receive less than 1% of global conservation funding (Global Landscapes Forum, 2021), and are some of the most marginalised peoples in the world. A recent report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC) (2021) highlighted the Years of conscritical role of IPLCs in this region to climate change mitigation, and the urgent need for additional support in five areas: recognition of collective territorial rights, compensation

¹ Findings from a review covering 37 countries located in tropical America, Africa and Asia

² Reduced forest carbon emissions were found in Bolivia, Brazil and Colombia, with results showing no statistically significant difference in Ecuador.

³ Estimates of investment based on labour and cash invested by communities from their own resources for work such as forest management, fire prevention and management, restoration and rehabilitation, patrolling and policing, mapping and cataloguing biodiversity.

for environmental services, community forest management, revitalisation of ancestral knowledge and strengthening of grassroots organisations and mechanisms for territorial governance (FAO and FILAC, 2021). Conservation initiatives have consistently failed to yield the powerful climate change mitigation results promised whilst further marginalising some of the most vulnerable communities in the world. It is therefore necessary to rethink our role as conservation actors.

Threats to the rainforest

Despite these achievements, pressure on the rainforest and the territories of IPLCs continues to grow, putting this history of sustainable management at risk. Areas of forest traditionally under the management of IPLCs but lacking formal tenure are at increasing risk of exploitation resulting in deforestation and often in the displacement and persecution of the communities living there (Baragwanath and Bayi, 2020; USAID, 2013). Furthermore, as global consumption patterns grow, increasing demand for agricultural land is a key driver of threats to forests (Ferrer Velasco et al., 2020; Jayathilake., et al, 2020) as well as the demand for forest commodities related to international trade. Deforestation linked to international trade is often concentrated in biodiversity hotspots which also function as key areas for carbon storage (Hoang and Kanemoto, 2021), and have significant overlap with the territories of IPLCs (Garnett et al., 2018).

Alongside these growing pressures, rainforests are suffering from the impacts of climate change, with rising temperatures and a drier climate contributing to a greater number of forest fires, which spread more easily, damaging larger areas of land. This has been identified as a growing driver of forest loss in Brazil and Indonesia (Seymour and Harris, 2019), and is evident in Cool Earth's own partnerships in Peru. Forests surrounding our partner communities in the Peruvian Amazon have seen an increasing number of devastating fires over the last few years, destroying large swathes of forests and threatening the lives and livelihoods of our partner communities.

In the face of the increasing threats to rainforests globally, and their critical importance as carbon sinks, concerted attention must be given to their sustainable management to ensure the future of life on earth. There is also a clear case that ensuring that IPLCs are able to continue to sustainably manage their forests is one of the best ways to ensure the ongoing protection of the rainforest. The question therefore, is what is the most efficient, and most just way for Cool Earth to support IPLCs as forest managers. This is where we believe that unconditional cash giving comes into play.

Existing market-based conservation mechanisms

There are existing conservation initiatives which provide cash with the aim of achieving conservation gains. Of these, the two that are most common in the fields of rainforest conservation and climate change mitigation are Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) programmes and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). Under both systems, landowners are provided payments on the basis that they protect their forests, making them the environmental version of conditional cash transfers which are seen widely in the humanitarian aid and development sectors. PES programmes provide payments for the protection of an ecosystem which provides downstream services for other resource users, such as the preservation of a watershed. REDD+ builds upon PES by specifically aiming to reduce carbon emissions released by forest loss. Both forms of programme are promoted as win-win solutions designed to achieve both conservation and poverty alleviation outcomes, although poverty alleviation outcomes are considered secondary to conservation ones. These systems seek to integrate the environment into the existing free market system, thus correcting the market failure that has seen the services that are provided by the environment as external to the economic system, and therefore not appropriately valued and regulated. More broadly, mechanisms which attempt to do this can be referred to as market-based instruments (MBIs).

Despite more than fifteen years of implementation, there is relatively little evidence that PES and REDD+ programmes can provide environmental benefits. There are very few high-quality studies on the effectiveness of MBIs for conservation (Samii, et al., 2014) and the results reported have been mixed at best, with results varying dramatically based on a large number of contextual factors and elements of programme design (Saami, et al., 2014; Calvet-Mir, et al., 2015; Börner, et al., 2017). In a sample taken in 2009, Adhiari and Agrawal (2013) found that the majority of PES programmes considered had positive environmental outcomes, and the findings from a randomised control trial of a PES programme in Uganda found that under certain conditions, conditional payments could result in positive forest outcomes (Jayachandran, 2017). However, Samii et al., (2014) found that PES programmes targeting tree cover had positive impacts on tree cover but that these were very small and Calvet-Mir et al., (2015) found that results on the environmental impacts of PES programmes were varied and inconclusive. In terms of REDD+ specifically, accusations have been made that REDD+ has had no success in protecting trees or carbon (RFUK, 2017). Further supporting the low quality of evidence for MBIs for conservation, and the lack of sound basis underlying the reasons for them, Börner et al., (2017) have found that there is little understanding of how PES programmes actually impact the ecosystems in which they work.

The evidence for socio-economic impacts of MBIs is also poor quality, however, negative impacts on social systems and equity have been widely (although not universally) discovered (Saami et al., 2014; Calvet-Mir et al., 2015; Taconi, Mahanty and Suich, 2013). MBIs have been seen to create class divides as the wealthy are able to access the economic benefits they

provide more easily than more marginalised people (Fletcher, 2012). Reviews of PES and REDD+ programmes have found that such initiatives can disrupt livelihoods, local institutions and socio-cultural systems by creating problems such as unequal benefit sharing, food insecurity, the introduction of new and powerful stakeholders into an existing system, encouragement of illegal land acquisition, improper processes for Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and introduction of monocultures (Bayrak and Marafa, 2016).

It has been argued that both environmental and social problems caused by MBIs in conservation are a result of poor programme design as opposed to an inherent flaw in the concepts themselves (Adhikari & Agrawal, 2013). However, others argue that the market-based nature of MBIs, and their focus on efficiency predisposes them towards the exacerbation of inequity. For example, one of the issues often highlighted with REDD+ programmes is that secure tenure is a requirement to take part in the scheme. This is likely to prioritise those who already own land to receive the economic benefits of REDD+ enrolment, and can negatively impact land insecure members of communities, therefore reinforcing existing inequalities, and at times creating them (Calvet-Mir et al., 2015). In a similar vein, the need for secure tenure has often prevented access to PES and REDD+ programmes by IPLCs. For IPLCs tenure arrangements may be communal or customary, and therefore may not meet the requirements of PES and REDD+ programmes. IPLCs are therefore often overlooked by these schemes, and excluded from any benefits they might provide whilst these programmes simultaneously fail to take advantage of the proven track record of IPLCs as environmental managers.

This does not mean that PES and REDD+ programmes are a complete failure, in fact, evidence suggests that in cases where conditions are appropriate, and sound attention is paid to project design, they can have some success in achieving positive environmental outcomes. However, the mixed evidence of their conservation outcomes, the common issues of exacerbated inequality and their inability to properly support IPLCs during the last 12 years of implementation are reasons for Cool Earth to look elsewhere for a model of cash giving that is more just, equitable and efficient.

Introducing Unconditional Cash Transfers

Cash transfer programmes have a long history in humanitarian aid and poverty reduction, and recently an increasing number of programmes have been providing unconditional cash transfers to participants hoping to achieve a range of outcomes from improvements to health, enrolment in education, and more generalised reduction in monetary poverty. Whilst an unconditional cash transfer programme by nature cannot specify how the money is spent or demand certain outcomes from its provision, such transfers can be 'signposted'. This means that a reference is made to the outcome(s) that the organisation providing the cash would like to see, although formal conditionality is not applied. Such unconditional programmes have tended to be more common in Africa than in Latin America but can be seen worldwide (Asfaw and Davis, 2018).

The body of evidence on the success of unconditional cash transfers is growing rapidly. Cash transfers have been shown to lead to improvements in living standards, with increases in a range of productive outcomes as found by Handa et al., (2018b). Other studies show positive outcomes from unconditional cash transfers on indicators such as health, nutrition and psychological wellbeing (Haushofer and Shapiro, 2016; Tonguet-Papucci et al., 2017), and have more generally shown their ability to increase household 'resilience' (Asfaw and Davis, 2018). This is supported by research which reviewed cash giving programmes across fifteen years and found that cash giving had had demonstrable positive impacts across six social and economic areas (Bastgali et al., 2019). Similarly, results from these programmes have shown that despite concerns among donors, unconditional cash transfers tend to be spent on health, education, food, and sometimes on income generating activities and community projects with no evidence that payments were spent on 'temptation goods' such as alcohol and tobacco (Basic Income Grant Coalition, 2009; Handa et al., 2019; Haushofer and Shapiro, 2016).

Unconditional Cash Transfers and Climate Change Mitigation

Unconditional transfers have not been widely applied in the fields of conservation and climate change mitigation, which tend to stick closely to conditional payments and MBIs. Given the potential that unconditional transfers are showing in other fields, and Cool Earth's conviction that supporting IPLCs within rainforest areas is a key aspect of conserving standing rainforest and therefore protecting carbon sinks, there is significant potential for unconditional cash transfers to be applied within the field of conservation.

So, what is the connection between providing unconditional cash to communities and conserving forests? The basis of this logic returns to the evidence outlined above which suggests that IPLCs with the resources and rights to manage their forests generally do so sustainably, thus conserving their carbon stocks. On this basis, increasing the resilience of these communities, by providing them with additional, flexible resources which can be spent wherever they feel most appropriate, is funding some of the most effective forest managers.

Unconditional cash transfers are most commonly used as a tool to alleviate poverty with the expectation that a reduction in poverty will create positive outcomes in the grantee's area of focus whether this is health, education or conservation. The idea behind providing unconditional cash for forest protection and climate change mitigation functions in much the same way.

A number of studies have linked poverty to environmental degradation (Aggrey et al., 2010; Masron & Subramaniam, 2019; Miyamoto, 2019). Similarly, Ferraro and Simorangkir (2020) recently showed that conditional poverty related cash giving reduced deforestation in Indonesia, whilst a recent study in Malaysia and Indonesia found that poverty reduction programmes are likely to have a significant impact on forest protection (Miyamoto, 2019). These findings are not

surprising. Whilst the drivers of deforestation are complex and area specific, in Cool Earth's experience poverty is a significant underlying cause of deforestation.

Providing cash has been shown to increase household resilience (Asfaw and Davies, 2018), and to reduce indicators of household poverty such as malnutrition (Tonguet-Papucci et al., 2017) and school absences (Basic Income Grant Coalition, 2009). We also know that rainforest communities do an excellent job of safeguarding their resources but are some of the most marginalised peoples in the world. In order to support the people with a track record of sustainable forest management in the face of increasing threats and pressures, it is necessary to invest decisively in these communities. Therefore, providing cash to IPLCs living in the rainforest can provide a resource to help them to continue to live in and manage their forests sustainably in the future, and to work against new and increasing external and internal threats and pressures. In some cases, providing cash may also reduce reliance on forest resources, particularly where increasing pressures have caused this use to become unsustainable, therefore contributing to forest protection.

Why Unconditional Cash? Sustainable futures rooted in justice and redistribution

However, the notion of poverty as it is currently used creates the illusion that poverty is a condition that exists divorced from systemic causes. This is not the case. To properly grasp the nature of poverty, and to trace the way in which this can be connected to conservation we must further explore the basis of this concept, and highlight the fact that marginalisation and poverty and their connection to conservation and climate change mitigation need to be understood as an interconnected range of realities.

The marginalisation of a community is tied to the historic political, social and economic patterns which have created conditions of apparent 'poverty'. IPLCs are some of the most marginalised peoples in the world. Generally speaking, the marginalisation that currently impacts these communities and their forests began when colonial powers claimed control over ancestral lands, and these colonial forms of land management continued post-independence, in the majority of Asian, African and American countries (Domínguez and Luoma, 2020). Since then, whilst some progress has been made towards restoring land rights for IPLCs, the problem of the dispossession of IPLCs remains on a large scale worldwide. Whilst IPLCs customarily occupied an estimated 65% global land area, only 18% is legally recognised as the territory of IPLCs, and in even fewer cases is this actually respected (Rights and Resources Initiative, 2015)⁴. In tandem, the rise of the conservation movement has inflicted further harm on IPLCs by building on the back of colonial legacies and reinforcing colonial land tenure systems and in many cases forcing IPLCs from their ancestral land (Domínguez and Luoma, 2020). Building on this lack of

⁴ Study utilising data from 64 countries for which sufficient, reliable data could be obtained.

secure land rights combined with racial and ethnic discrimination both under colonial regimes and since independence and lack of access to resources, IPLCs and their land have been exploited by systems of extraction which support colonial and neo-colonial powers at their expense. As a result of this, many IPLCs are considered to be living in poverty.

Climate change is a result of the overconsumption of major polluting powers over the last 300 years (but drastically accelerated in the last 100). The same system of exploitation, colonialism and rampant consumerism that created the environmental disaster we all face, moulded the inequalities and imbalances of power we see across the world today. These imbalances mean that those the least responsible for causing climate change are the most impacted by it, and are responsible for the marginalisation of IPLCs. The conservation movement, born out of the colonial movement, and unable or unwilling to shake off its roots in racism and classism, has built on these existing structures. This has meant that conservation funding rarely reaches people who live with and rely on critical ecosystems and conservation practice has dispossessed these same people and excluded them from decision-making (Domínguez and Luoma, 2020). This has resulted in, at best, ambivalent and at worst, disastrous environmental outcomes and has driven poverty, inequity and human rights violations (Domínguez and Luoma, 2020; Tauli-Corpuz, Alcorn and Molnar, 2016, Cornered by PAs, Website).

This is the second key part of the argument for the provision of unconditional cash to IPLCs for conservation and climate change outcomes. Not only is this an efficient and effective method of climate change mitigation, but providing unconditional funds directly to some of the world's most marginalised communities is a contribution towards pushing the conservation movement in the direction of justice and equity.

Based on all of the above, we draw on Büscher and Fletcher's work proposing a 'conservation basic income' in the form of unconditional payments to rainforest reliant communities (Büscher and Fletcher 2019, 2020). These payments would ensure that conservation funding reaches those who have been historically dispossessed by conservation practices, placing decision-making power and control in the hands of the people who have the knowledge, skills and connection to the forest required to truly make a difference. Giving unconditional cash is therefore a recognition that we do not know best, and an investment in those who do, providing resources to the people best placed to create the locally specific conservation practices that years of research shows are the only ones that can actually succeed.

Cash in the hands of indigenous peoples and local communities can therefore be the ultimate flexible resource and a key component in the preservation of rainforest ecosystems.

Risks and Assumptions

Despite the arguments above, and Cool Earth's conviction that providing strings free cash is an important step to take for the world of conservation, it does not come without risks, and it would

be irresponsible not to take stock of these so that they can be appropriately factored into programme design. The worlds of conservation and development (which overlap significantly when it comes to climate mitigation) are known for chasing apparent ‘win-win’ solutions without appropriate forethought, care and consideration for the unique circumstances of every individual area, community and ecosystem type. This inevitably results in negative social and environmental outcomes. Whilst there is certainly huge potential for climate mitigation in supporting IPLCs, this should never be treated as a simple solution which is scalable without the need for intensive planning, consultation with communities involved and careful tailoring to each set of unique circumstances.

As previously highlighted, unconditional cash giving has not been widely trialled for conservation, and some existing studies (although limited in scope and non-generalisable) have been unable to show positive environmental outcomes from cash giving (Wilebore et al., 2019)⁵. In terms of unconditional cash programmes more generally, there are questions about whether the results of these programmes can be sustained long-term, and negative social and economic impacts have also been seen (MacAuslan & Riemenschneider, 2011; Bastgali, et al., 2016). These concerns are likely to be relevant in the design of any conservation focused cash-giving programme as well. In some cases, provision of cash has been found to disrupt local social systems within recipient communities, consequently having negative impacts on wellbeing (MacAuslan & Riemenschneider, 2011), or caused resentment towards participant households from those not involved (Haushofer, et al., 2015). Communication problems and misunderstanding of the nature, scope and length of cash giving programmes have also been found, and have resulted in participants making significant life decisions – such as having another child – based on a misunderstanding of the programme (Tonguet-Papucci et al., 2017). External factors unrelated to project design or implementation could also present risks to a cash-giving programme such as lack of government support. For example, Give Directly, who provide unconditional cash as a tool for poverty alleviation, were required to suspend their activities in Uganda in September 2020, after claiming that the cash transfers were likely to make recipients lazy and promote idleness, domestic violence, dependency syndrome and tension with neighbouring villages, and they have only recently been allowed to resume activities (Development Diaries, 2021). Therefore, not only the internal aspects of programmatic design and delivery must be considered, but also the roles of external stakeholders must be carefully considered.

Key learnings for the implementation of unconditional cash giving can be taken from Cool Earth’s history of cash giving in both Peru and Papua New Guinea. One of the clear findings from Cool Earth’s previous experience in Papua New Guinea has been that there is a critical difference between providing cash transfers to committees, to households, or to individuals (this finding is not paralleled in Peru as cash here has more consistently been distributed to committees). In PNG it was found that where a model of committee giving was practised, funds

⁵ This paper reviewed the provision of cash vouchers to forest dependent communities on the outskirts of a national park in Sierra Leone. Cash vouchers were time-limited and could only be spent on a predetermined list of goods. The study found no statistically significant environmental effects, but also had a very small sample size.

were normally spent on shared community assets and infrastructure, whilst when funds were provided to households they tended to be spent on in-family purchases of services and consumables. Therefore, neither form of giving alone will cover all the development needs of a community (Skeats, 2021). Our experiences from PNG in fact line up with those demonstrated in a randomised control trial of cash giving in Sierra Leone (Bulte et al, 2016) in the buffer zone of Gola Rainforest National Park. In this case giving to individuals led to increased goods consumption and giving at a communal level (to leaders) resulted in more public goods and management. It is worth noting that Sierra Leone has a social structure of Chiefs and landowners who control land use of other local residents, similar to the Clan leaders in PNG. In another parallel to our work in PNG, in this case from Sierra Leone it was found that the trust and honesty of leaders affected the impact of cash giving on a communal level, with elite capture a possibility (Bulte et al., 2016) with parallel our own experience of cash giving in PNG (Skeats, 2021). The risk of elite capture has also been seen in Cool Earth's experience of cash giving in Peru, with distribution through committees allowing opportunities for powerful families to benefit more than those living in remote villages (Simonneau, 2021).

One critical finding is consistent throughout Cool Earth's cash giving work in both PNG and Peru, and this is the importance of a thorough understanding of and grounding in local contexts. A vast range of factors influence the impacts of a cash giving programme, and these can vary at the level of the village or community or even within a village or community. It is not possible to record each factor which can impact the outcomes of a programme, but across Cool Earth's work in PNG and Peru some broader fields that these fall into include local social context, including intra- and inter-clan, community or village cohesiveness, which can significantly affect things such as elite capture and benefit sharing, local financial context including access to markets, and how much cash is used within a specific group of people, land use and land conflicts and existing infrastructure and services. Infrastructure and services in particular determines whether cash can be used to meet people's needs (Skeats, 2021; Simonneau, 2021).

Indeed the importance of adaptation to unique circumstances in every community, and an understanding of what that means for project design and what outcomes are possible. It is clear that the potential for cash giving projects to be a success or a failure, and the potential to help or to harm, are dictated largely by the attention given to the unique context of each community and tailoring each project to fit these appropriately. As well as differences such as those outlined above around existing social and economic conditions and relationships, how these existing conditions work with the design of the programme is also very significant. For example, whether cash is provided as a lump sum or in smaller, more regular grants, the duration of the project, whether it is provided at a communal level or to households or individuals, and even the way in which money is channelled and accessed by recipients all play an influential role in programme outcomes, with different methods being appropriate for different contexts. It is therefore critical that we recognise the limitations of this work. As we cannot implement an identical (or even a particularly similar) programme across a number of communities, we cannot easily compare like for like and achieve 'proof' of whether a single approach to providing cash works. We will also be unable to find an area in which we could isolate the provision of unconditional cash from any

other inputs to the local situation. It is therefore unlikely to be possible to ever attribute change in behaviours or forest cover to the provision of cash at the level of causality.

The central and most cohesive message from the existing literature on cash giving is to highlight the fact that no programme can achieve universal success, nor can programme design ever be successfully divorced from its context. The outcomes of cash giving programmes, whether positive or negative, are largely determined by the pre-existing socio-economic and environmental conditions of a participant community and how carefully a programme is tailored to meet local needs and mesh with existing socio-economic structures. This understanding must be at the heart of programme design for cash giving to help to mitigate some of the risks of causing harm through this intervention.

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