

Global Cash Forum

Table of Contents

An introduction to the Global Cash Forum 2022	5
Regional Sessions	7
Global Session opening remarks	7
Statements from ICRC and IFRC	8
Asia Pacific Regional Session	9
Middle East & North Africa Regional Session	10
Africa Regional Session	11
Europe Regional Session	12
Americas Regional Session	13
Questions and Answers: High-Level Dialogue	15



An introduction to the Global Cash Forum 2022

The Global Cash Forum was held on 10 February 2022 with the aim to strengthen the Red Cross Red Crescent's (RCRC) leadership commitment to supporting the use of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) in humanitarian action.

The Forum, co-hosted by the Cash Hub and Turkish Red Crescent, was a virtual event involving a series of five Regional Sessions: Asia Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. These sessions provided an opportunity for senior representatives of National Societies (NS) to share their learning and experience of CVA in responding to crises in their contexts and to reflect on what organisational and operational capacity is required to be “cash ready”. The sessions also looked at trends in donor policy and funding for CVA, and opportunities for developing partnerships.

A Global Dialogue was then held to further strengthen the Movement's global commitment to advance the use of CVA as a humanitarian tool. During this Dialogue, senior representatives from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) joined the discussions and the outcomes of the Regional Sessions were presented by each region.

The Report, Dignity in Action: Key data and learning on CVA from across the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement was launched at the Forum. Panel speakers responded to the findings of the Report in the discussions, building on the six key learnings.

The Forum was attended by 731 participants from 142 countries and regions from across the world, including NS leaders, programme managers, CVA specialists, volunteers, and IFRC and ICRC staff.

This Global Cash Forum report provides a brief summary of the main discussion points at the Forum. Details of the event, including a full recording of all the Regional Sessions, the Global Dialogue Session and the Spotlight Session on the Turkish Red Crescent Kizilaykart Programme is available on the Cash Hub platform.

A background to CVA

The RCRC Movement continues to be an experienced leader in CVA and is well-positioned to deliver cash locally through its unique role and network of NS, and their staff and volunteers.

In 2020, the Movement distributed 867 million CHF to 10.2 million people in 116 countries. Not only has there been a growth in the amount of CVA distributed by the Movement but there has also been an increase in the number of NS who are continually investing in CVA Preparedness (CVAP).

Recognising the importance of preparedness, the Movement has made significant investments to be able to provide quality, timely assistance by: strengthening CVA processes, systems, tools; ensuring sufficient financial and human resources are in place; participating in local coordination structures as well as communication and advocacy on CVA. In 2021, 72 NS were actively investing in CVAP.

Commitment to the scale-up of CVA within the Movement continues to be a strategic priority. The IFRC Secretariat's ambition is to deliver 50 per cent of humanitarian action through CVA by 2025. Central to these targets and plans is the aim to enable NS to become recognised partners of choice for scalable CVA delivery that is accountable and timely.

Change is still needed

Yet, despite the progress of CVA and the increased commitment to its use within the broader Movement there remain varying levels of acceptance of CVA across NS. Further change is still needed across the Movement if the transformational power of CVA on the way humanitarian assistance is delivered is to be realised. Leadership support is a particularly critical enabler to create the conditions for NS to be cash ready.

It was with this learning and advocacy focus in mind that the Cash Hub and Turkish Red Crescent organised the discussions of the Global Cash Forum 2022.

Global Session opening remarks

Mike Adamson, CEO of British Red Cross, and Chair of the Cash Advisory Group introduced the Global Session discussion, highlighting the key role of CVA as a humanitarian tool and its critical relevance to the work of the Movement. Reflecting on the Global Report and the outcomes from the Regional Sessions, he noted prominent themes for further discussion and challenges for leadership attention in the global dialogue.

Dr Kerem Kinik, Vice President, IFRC, President Türk Kızılay

Key points

- Effective CVA allows us to respond quickly and at scale to emergencies.
- CVA is an effective tool in delivering assistance in many contexts as it offers freedom of choice, dignified support and can empower vulnerable people.
- Türk Kızılay's Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) has become the world's largest cash-based programme. Its 'ready to go' structure means that providing CVA during emergencies has become more efficient, trackable and transparent. ESSN has a lot to offer to the Movement as a programme model for replication.
- For 2022 the TRC has committed 1 million USD to help support other NS in advancing the use of CVA.
- It is important that we share CVA learning and experience with each other - the main purpose of this Global Cash Forum.
- This year alone, 274 million people will need humanitarian assistance - almost 40 million more than last year. We need to continually find new ways to deliver humanitarian assistance more effectively and at scale.

Statements from ICRC and IFRC

Sarah Epprecht, ICRC, Deputy Director of Operations

Key points

- CVA has demonstrated added value, putting decision-making power into the hands of communities, and has a multiplier effect on the local economy, including in conflict settings.
- CVA has been a positive catalyst for the wider humanitarian world for reaching beyond 'just cash', through digitalisation, better accountability, and an overall better humanitarian impact.
- Economic security is the driver of ICRC's CVA work.
- Standard practice is paramount by having robust data protection, impact assessments and stronger community engagement. in place.
- Security and data protection are vital to mitigate the risks of increased digital technology; we must advocate for the respect of humanitarian data. ICRC is increasingly working with NS that are well placed to develop links with government social protection programmes.
- It is important that the leadership of our Movement remains engaged to further support the development of CVA as a tool in humanitarian response
- We must always keep in mind the principles of impartiality and neutrality and continue to learn from one another.

Xavier Castellanous, IFRC, Under Secretary General for NS Development and Operations Coordination

Key points

- Investment in our people, systems, and NS structures remains key.
- NS are critical national actors to support people affected by crises and working with national governments is crucial to their preparedness.
- IFRC will continue to provide training on data management to NS.
- Linking CVA to SP is important and relevant for NS, and having the relevant infrastructures in place to scale up and reach more people with speed to strengthen local response.
- CVA has the power to support and transform people's recovery after disasters and crises.
- With the increased use of digital technology comes the need to ensure data protection at the highest levels of security and integrity.
- The increase of digital technology has exposed the digital divide among our membership.
- We must change our mindsets and put affected people at the centre of our response as well as change the way we work.

Asia Pacific Regional Session

Chair:

Juja Kim, IFRC Deputy Director, Asia Pacific Region

Panellists:

Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam, Bangladesh RCS, Acting Secretary General

J. Maireng Sengebau, Palau RCS, Executive Director

Elizabeth Zavalla, Philippine RC, Secretary General

Nguyen Hai Anh, Viet Nam RCS, Vice President and Secretary General

NS and scaling up

- NS must carefully consider how they can play a bigger part in Social Protection systems with governments and how best they can engage in them at the national and local level.
- CVA has created opportunities to form new partnerships and strengthen existing ones, including sub-national and national governments, other humanitarian organisations, inc. UN agencies, and communities themselves.
- CVA leads to a more transparent, effective response - this creates an opportunity for the profiling and recognition of NS.
- The increase and range of CVA donors has enabled resources to be mobilised quickly.
- CVAP is an important and key learning process for those who are new to CVA.

Recipients

- Data sharing and collection protocols are critical components of CVA; we must not collect more data than we need, and recipients have a right to privacy and data protection.

Challenges

- Whilst donor support for CVA is growing, work is still needed to convince certain donors of the benefits of CVA, especially non-institutional ones.
- CVAP can take time to set up and requires long-term investment in organisational development, but it results in a more effective response and a scale-up in assistance.

Middle East & North Africa Regional Session

Chair:

George Kettaneh, Lebanese RC, Secretary General

Panellists:

Ramy Elnazer, Egyptian RC, CEO

H.E. Dr. Al Hadid, Jordan RC, President

Khaled Erksoussi, Syrian Arab RC, President

Abdullah Saleh Alazap, Yemen RC, DMC Coordinator

NS and scaling-up

- Further empowerment and advocacy for CVA from NS leadership is key to the institutionalisation of CVA within the region.
- The continued exchange of CVA knowledge, experience, mentoring and capacity support between NS is important and one of the most effective ways to strengthen capacity.
- CVAP must continue to be an organisational priority, as it remains one of the key pillars for CVA success.
- As CVA is scaled up across the humanitarian system, partnerships and strong coordination for CVA both internally as a Movement and externally are essential.
- The ongoing importance of responsible data management and data protection in our CVA programmes, and robust processes and procedures will be essential.

Recipients

- CVA is an important driver of dignity for recipients and brings numerous benefits compared to traditional forms of in-kind assistance.
- Programme learning and feedback have shown how CVA has helped people in the region meet their basic needs, such as restoring livelihoods, protection, education and health etc., and in the last two years to respond to the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenges

- Managing the transition from providing cash for an emergency response to a longer-term recovery programme aimed at supporting sustainable livelihoods.
- Planning a proper exit strategy, especially from longer-term CVA support linked to social protection and contexts of protracted crises.

Africa Regional Session

Chair:

Dr Asha Mohammed, Kenya RCS, Secretary General

Panellists:

Danger Nhlabatsi, Baphalali Eswatini RCS, Secretary General

Hortense Sombié, Burkinabe RCS, Food Security & Livelihoods Coordinator

Dauda Mohammed, Nigerian RCS, Cash Programme Focal

Mohamed Abdellahi, Mauritania RC, Cash Focal Point

NS and scaling up

- Commitment and buy-in at a leadership level from NS are essential if the Africa region is to scale up use of CVA in programmes.
- There is a hunger for peer learning, collaboration, and support between NS.
- CVAP is essential if NS are to scale up support of crisis-affected communities beyond just basic needs.
- CVAP enables NS to engage in advocacy on CVA with different partners such as government and other humanitarian actors.

Recipients

- Community engagement is key, as is the integration of feedback mechanisms to help us adapt and improve CVA programmes.
- NS must trust that recipients will use CVA to help themselves, as demonstrated in the wide range of research and programme evidence that shows that communities will use CVA appropriately.
- CVA gives people back their dignity – this transformation is hugely important, and NS need to continue to support and prioritise it.
- CVA can help reduce corruption risks, especially with the advancements in digital cash payment systems which enable improved levels of accountability and transparency.

Challenges

- Ensure the Movement we can offer appropriate support to NS that need it, in particular for investment in CVAP which is a challenging area to secure donor funding.
- A reoccurring concern is how CVA will be used by recipients. Documentation is therefore paramount to convince different stakeholders that recipients will not misuse CVA. Continue to build the evidence base for CVA from RCRC programmes and recipient feedback to demonstrate aid effectiveness and efficiency, and most importantly dignity and accountability.
- NS must be able to appropriately deliver CVA to those communities that do not have digital cash mechanisms in place, ensuring that access to digital technology does not become a barrier to receiving CVA.

Europe Regional Session

Chair:

Brigitte Bischoff Ebbesen, IFRC, Regional Director, Europe

Panellists:

Hayarpi Karapetyan, Armenian RCS, Head of ARCS Tracing Service

Sophia Peponi, Hellenic RC, Director of Programmes and Partnerships Dept.

Chingiz Dzhakipov, Kyrgyzstan RC, President;

Alper Küçük, Türk Kızılay, Deputy Director General.

NS and scaling-up

- Leadership buy-in is critical for enabling NS to scale up the use of CVA and be cash ready humanitarian organisations
- COVID-19 has proved how shock responsive CVA is a game-changer for domestic operations of NS to scale up and diversify their programmes and services.
- There are many opportunities for NS peer exchange within the Europe region, learning from a range of operational contexts, programmes and NS experiences in delivering CVA. The Turkish Red Crescent's Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) has proved that with collaboration across the Movement, NS can scale up massively and take the role as the leading CVA actor and partner of choice.
- CVA presents opportunities for new partnerships, including taking advantage of corporate social responsibility and collaboration with the private sector.
- The mantra of 'just do it' is a powerful one with CVA: NS should feel empowered to test, learn and improve, and fail sometimes in developing the use of CVA. Not every NS can be cash ready but there is value in learning by doing.

Recipients

- People prefer cash; cash is a catalyst for community engagement.
- NS play an important auxiliary role in helping build trust with crisis-affected communities.
- Governments can lean towards NS when providing CVA as they are well placed to link humanitarian cash to government Social Protection programmes.

Challenges

- Linking to Social Protection brings efficiencies and partnership opportunities but we must be aware of the risks, including the challenges in managing clear exit strategies.
- NS face an ongoing challenge of data management and FSP contracting; Movement experience and expert support will be needed to addressing these two key areas.

Americas Regional Session

Chair:

Guillermo Garcia, American RC, Executive Director, International Response & Programs.

Panellists:

Amanda Lewis-Adderley, Bahamas RC, NS Volunteer;

Lily Bowman, Belize RCS, Director General;

Dr Fabian Arellano, Colombian RCS, Disaster Risk Management Lead;

Alexei Castro, Honduras RC, Executive Director.

NS and scaling up

- In order to scale up cash capacity within a NS there must be a willingness from leadership to learn from CVA experience on the ground and the growing use of digital cash.
- Learnings and successes come from harnessing NS people power, from senior leadership to volunteers.
- The importance of ongoing training remains crucial, enabling more staff and volunteers to deliver CVA programmes.
- Strengthening coordination on CVA and active participation with local and national government, to enable the provision of quality longer-term services.
- Paramount to CVA success is the importance of continuously updating market assessments and considering different delivery options for programmes.

Recipients

- Community engagement from the onset of an event, and preferably pre-event, is central to the design of CVA.
- CVA can bring transformational benefits by helping to restore tangible assets, such as livelihoods or shelter.
- CVA contributes to restoring dignity and well being.
- Digital technologies have enabled NS to support more communities and increased numbers of people in crisis with CVA.
- Important to link CVA with community engagement and accountability in order to inform the most appropriate technology and preferred delivery mechanism.
- An understanding of the context in which NS are working plays a key role in how successful a CVA programme is.
- Ensuring data protection allows us to build trust with recipients.

Challenges

- Important to understand and mitigate the risks and concerns around digital data protection.
- It is important for NS to invest in CVAP in the long term and not wait until an emergency happens.
- Strong commitment engagement is key to understanding and addressing any digital barriers that might exist.

³Dignity in Action: Key data and learning on CVA from across the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, 2022
The Global Humanitarian Overview, 2022, <https://gho.unocha.org>.

Key Questions and Answers from the Global Dialogue

Cash support is very reliable, timely, cost-efficient, and manageable. How do we ensure the availability of funds to deliver cash by the NS when it is required? Is there robust back up support from IFRC & partners?

For NS who are interested in CVA and want to build their ability to be cash ready, how can this be done and what options for support are available?

Having funds available to mount a cash-based intervention is critical and operational learning has shown that this is a major reason for a delay in providing cash to crisis-affected people. Work to ensure that finance systems are cash ready, including how to draw down on resources, how disbursements are approved and reconciled and how to ensure local liquidity is one aspect focused on during cash preparedness. This has to be done ahead of time and tested to ensure that finance systems can facilitate the delivery of cash as well as meet the required standards and compliance requirements.

In terms of the availability of resources, embedding cash into resource mobilisation strategies is another key component of preparedness as well as support being available from the IFRC and other Movement partners in a range of ways (such as through the DREF mechanism).

Regarding options for support, a good place to start is to talk to your peer NS and those around you who have both delivered CVA and built their capacity through preparedness to be increasingly cash ready. You can see which NS are already delivering CVA in your locality from the Cash Maps. It can also be really useful to attend a CVA training in your region to learn more or do an exchange visit with a peer NS to gain exposure to cash and see delivery in action.

The IFRC and its partners are committed to support NS to scale up their ability to deliver cash in emergencies and during preparedness and its country, cluster and regional delegations, can extend support and help to connect you to others within the IFRC network. Technical support can often be supported by your IFRC Regional Cash Coordinator as well as the Cash Hub Helpdesk who can signpost other NS and resources.

For the NS who did not test yet CVA or are still reluctant to scale up, what would be your key message to encourage them?

It is clear that CVA preparedness is key. What would leadership advise those NS or ICRC delegations that may be hesitant or haven't yet tried CVA. What would be the most impactful support in making that first step?

For NS who have not undertaken CVA previously, it is really helpful to talk to other leaders about their experience and what it has mean for their NS to use CVA. Leadership buy in is critical to being able to prioritise the changes needed to start using CVA. Leaders talking to leaders has been shown to allow perceptions, concerns and even opportunities to be discussed and shared.

Seeing is believing – whilst some are reluctant to take up cash, often for very valid reasons, there are few risks that are specific to cash as opposed to all forms of humanitarian assistance. For those that are, these can be considered, management and mitigated. It can be transformative to actually implement and see a small cash pilot in action, this can often help any reluctance to be resolved.

The Movement has a common approach to cash preparedness which is built from a large number of NS and their own experiences. This guidance should be useful for everyone on how and where to start within your own NS. There is a specific chapter for ICRC delegations as well.

There was common agreement from Leadership during the Forum that the first step in cash preparedness, is to consider how cash could be relevant for the vision and plans for your NS. Will this improve your ability to provide a service to people that promotes dignity and contributes to local markets? Could this improve the visibility and perceptions of your NS with stakeholders such as the Government, UN partners and donors? Gaining clarity on how cash can strengthen your NS is key to then being able to prioritise the resources and time that will be needed.

The other key message from Leadership was just do it, start with a pilot, use cash in an operation and then be ready to learn and improve from that experience. Get started and commit to learning and scaling up incrementally, that is how all NS have started!

What do you think the role of NSs will/could be in view of the recent global Caucus discussions and decision on Cash Coordination? How can NSs position themselves to play a key role supporting the Grand Bargain 2.0 localization agenda?

The IFRC network has been influential in the discussions so far, bringing attention to the role of the local actors and local leadership in cash coordination at all levels and in small, medium and large emergencies. The process now brings real opportunities for NS willing to champion a leadership role in their local context as well as present opportunities for increased participation.

This Forum shows that within the Movement there are great experiences and knowledge in CVA among the NSs, how can knowledge sharing be enhanced?

There are CVA Regional Working Groups or Communities of Practice operating in most regions where NS are, the IFRC Secretariat and partner NS have come together to enable the sharing of knowledge, amongst NS working in similar contexts. In addition to this there are several other fora which allow peer-to-peer sharing including this Global Cash Forum, regular Cash Hub Webinars, and case studies/tools/reports shared via the Cash Hub platform.

What is the movement position towards the ECHO common cash approach for large-scale cash transfers (with A-B-C partners)? Turkey seems like a good example of how it can be implemented but in other contexts it might be more difficult.

There is not currently one Movement position to this given the breath and mandates of all the Movement components. However, there is growing experience from the IFRC and NS on working with ECHO in small, medium and large-scale responses.

I feel that donating towards organisations who use CVA means that more of my donation goes towards those who are in need, rather than towards suppliers, transporters etc. Is there any indication that moving towards CVA is having an impact on donor relations?

There is strong evidence that using CVA can be more efficient than provision of in-kind assistance, for instance it can be more shock responsive as shown during the COVID-19 pandemic and it can better meet people's needs in a more dignified manner. Many donors are strongly supportive of the use of CVA and are encouraging organisations to consider CVA in every operational and programme and to use it where it is relevant.

Indeed, several major donor governments came together and agreed a Common Donor Approach for Humanitarian Cash Programming and to a set of principles to improve humanitarian assistance and set out a shared vision for the use of cash in humanitarian action that will be jointly used to guide funding decisions.

For many NS, using CVA has also been key in attracting further resources to their NS which is documented in 'Strengthening locally led humanitarian action through cash preparedness' and was discussed in a recent Planet Red webinar.