Investing in Cash and Voucher Assistance Preparedness

Investing in National Society Development



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Acronyms

01 Background and Rationale

A strong National Society is one that "consistently delivers, through volunteers and staff, relevant countrywide services to vulnerable people, sustained for as long as needed and that contributes to the strength of IFRC and the Movement".¹

National Societies (NS) are the backbone of the **International Red Cross** and **Red Crescent Movement** (IFRC). Each one is made up of an unparalleled network of community-based volunteers and staff who provide a wide variety of services². The specific role of the 191 NS and the services they provide varies country by country, due to the different needs of communities, as well as the different relationships NS have with their respective authorities. Thanks to their networks of local branches and volunteers, NS are able to operate in countries experiencing disasters, conflicts, or a collapse in their social fabric.

NS balance their humanitarian obligations towards vulnerable groups with existing organisational development commitments to develop their auxiliary role, strategy, governance and accountability; strengthen areas such as financial management and sustainability, communications, ensure volunteer engagement and management and improve capacity to manage external relations³. This calls for continued support and exchange between RCRC Movement actors to enable the ongoing development of NS and to ensure this is not negatively affected by any international support during responses to emergencies.

NS can enhance their **organisational capacity** in many ways and through many approaches and are often guided by the <u>National Society Development Framework</u> (IFRC 2013b), recently reinforced by the <u>IFRC Secretariat's Agenda for Renewal</u> (IFRC 2020b). The documents are all based on the definition of a strong NS.

NS can showcase their **operational capacity** in many ways, including in their invaluable role as local responders spotlighted in the Grand Bargain localisation agenda⁴, and in through Preparedness for an Effective Response⁵ (PER). The use of cash and vouchers (CVA) as a response modality to meet needs⁶ offers new opportunities for NS as better prepared local responders with a wide geographical reach to respond at scale.

Cash and Voucher Preparedness (CVAP) contributes to a NS preparedness capacity both at organisational and operational levels as can be seen in the CVAP Theory of Change⁷. CVAP investments create further opportunities for National Society Development (NSD) investments, as both can be designed to strengthen NS ability to respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of those most affected by disasters and crises. The need for more explicit linkages between a NS´s overall development plan and CVAP has been recognised⁸ and builds on the IFRC minimum standards for NS set out in the Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process.⁹

- 1 (National Society Development Compact)
- 2 The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement About National Societies
- 3 go.ifrc.org/deployments/catalogue/other/national-society-development
- 4 "Greater support is provided for the leadership, delivery and capacity of local responders and the participation of affected communities in addressing humanitarian needs" <u>Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream</u>
- 5 IFRC Preparedness for Effective Response
- 6 The State of the World's Cash 2020
- 7 CVAP Theory of Change
- 8 CVAP evaluation Key Finding 10: The sustainability of cash preparedness investments is almost completely de-pendent on the extent to which cash preparedness and CBA are mainstreamed throughout the National Society as part of a broader organisational development, DM and national society development (NSD) processes, in 2020 Cash-Preparedness-Evaluation-Report-Executive-Summary
- 9 National Society Assessment & Development processes

Who is this document for

This document is of most relevance to NS who are interested in National Society development (NSD) as well as NS using cash and vouchers as part of a response. It has been written with NS in mind but is relevant to IFRC staff supporting NSD processes, practitioners involved in NSD, particularly capacity assessment processes such as OCAC and CVA Preparedness. It describes the overlaps and synergies of the two, as tools for identifying and addressing NS organisational and operational capacity gaps. This document complements existing guidance on how CVA links to NS preparedness (PER).¹⁰ The Cash in Emergencies Toolkit Module 1 on preparedness provided guidance on Tools on placing CVAP in the NS strategic plans including NSD and PER.¹¹

The document also provides examples of NS CVAP investments to help practitioners see how they contribute to NSD principles, building, supporting and sustaining NS structures that are cost-effective, pre-positioned, accountable, and fast in response.

The following section provides a short overview of NSD and CVA Preparedness to bring together the information of relevance to the intended audience.

02 What is National Society Development (NSD)?

National Society Development (NSD) is the work undertaken by a NS to increase one or more of the relevance, quality, reach and sustainability of its services for vulnerable communities.

"NSD is the continuous effort of each National Society to achieve and maintain an accountable and sustainable organization that delivers – through volunteers and staff – relevant services to address needs, reduce vulnerabilities and build resilience in a changing environment." 12

NSD encompasses all aspects of the life of a NS, including both what is referred to as Organisational (core) Development and Capacity Strengthening or Enhancement (see Glossary of technical terms at the end).

- Organizational development focuses on fundamental issues such as a NS's identity, legal base, strategic directions, its relationship with its environment, auxiliary role etc. while taking into account the relationship between all the functions and levels.
- Capacity strengthening/enhancing aims to improve a NS's existing services and capacities. It covers both the development of its programmes and its underpinning processes.

Key NSD investments can support NS use its collective mandates, assets, relationships, and resources to channel and communicate the voices of the most marginalized, vulnerable and voiceless communities of the world from local to global arenas.¹³

¹⁰ Guidance for Mainstreaming Cash and Voucher Assistance Cash Preparedness for Effective Response - Chapter 1: CVAP Areas and PER-Summary

¹¹ Cash-in-emergencies-toolkit/preparedness Tools: M1_1_1b CVAP Induction and Visioning workshop TOR; M1_1_1c CVAP Induction and Visioning Workshop Facilitators Guide; M1_1_3a Planning workshop TOR; M1_1_3b CVAP Planning workshop facilitators guide; M1_1_3c CVAP Self-Assessment Too

¹² IFRC 2023 Global Plan p 52-53 – original reference IFRC NSD Policy 2022

¹³ Case study: Localization of humanitarian action in the RCRC Movement



Examples of the achievements of NSD investment documented in recent IFRC case studies of five NS:14

- · Refreshed humanitarian leadership;
- · Stronger community-engaging local structures;
- · Data gathering and communication skills; and
- · External partnership building and advocacy capabilities.

NSD relies on building robust systems for:

- **Improved financial sustainability,** including resource mobilization and income generation, financial management, to remain viable.¹⁵
- **Digital transformation** and systems development, to remain a trusted partner of choice through improved data management and data protection.
- NS branch coverage strong service and programme provision to at risk communities in the
 areas of disaster preparedness and response, health and care, climate change, migration
 and the protection of affected people.

CVAP can contribute to the above if integrated into NSD investments.

03 What is Cash and Voucher Assistance Preparedness (CVAP)?¹⁶

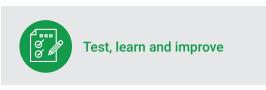
CVAP invests in NS ability to organise its resources and systems to institutionalise CVA in its responses. CVAP therefore invests in both NS organisational capacity and operationally capacity and ability to deliver CVA.¹⁷ The CVAP process is structured around five key thematic areas called:











Originally designed as a **capacity strengthening** activity, to improve a NS's existing services and capacities, NS rolling out CVA Preparedness investments have increasingly been able to link these to aspects of **organizational development** such as a NS's identity, strategic directions, its auxiliary role, its relationship with crises affected populations and the international humanitarian community. The CVAP process is therefore being increasingly seen as a holistic organisational development approach by NS who have made CVAP investments typically lasting between three to five years¹⁸. It requires NS management commitment, proper time, financial and technical resource investment to achieve long term goals. Some of the cash preparedness activities can be carried out during emergency response operations and lead to longer term CVAP investments for the NS.¹⁹

This means that CVAP investments have links with broader questions around NS positioning with partners and donors and organisational strategies and a high potential for being integrated into NSD approaches, NS development plans and strategies.

This is where CVAP is part of NSD.

CVAP organisational and operational capacity is measured in Levels (1;2;3; and 3+), in a similar way to the way OCAC Core Capacities are measured in levels (B; C; D; and E). (See Annex for more details on CVAP Levels).

¹⁶ IFRC NSD Compact 2021 page 16

¹⁷ CVA Preparedness Theory of Change 2020

¹⁸ See <u>Cash Maps</u> to discover the different ways the programmes and operations of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are meeting humanitarian outcomes using cash assistance and which national societies are investing in cash preparedness.

¹⁹ IFRC NSD Assessment & Development Processes Guidance

04 Overlaps between CVAP and NSD – The OCAC and the CVAP Self-Assessment Tool

This section provides practical suggestions on ways of linking CVAP and NSD investments, through organisational capacity assessment approaches. The **NSD Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification** (OCAC- at the time of writing to be changed to OCA²⁰) and the **CVA Preparedness Capacity Self-Assessment Tool** both help a NS assess its capacity and identify capacity gaps for the NS to deliver its strategy.



The Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification



The CVA Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment Tool

The Organizational Capacity Assessment and **Certification** (OCAC) is a broad/comprehensive assessment process. It has two assessment phases: the first phase focuses on NS capacities, e.g. its structure, systems, procedures, and the resources it needs to function in an effective manner. This is done by way of a selfassessment, conducted by a group of about 15 people representative of the NS as a whole supported by external facilitators. The second phase examines the impact the NS has in the country, looking into the relevance, quality and scale of a NS services, and conducted by a group of selected peer NS reviewers. NS meeting the minimum standards set for each phase can get certified by the IFRC Governing Board.²¹

The CVA Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment Tool is a comprehensive list of every aspect of CVAP, structured according to the five CVAP Areas and components. It has been designed to inform a NS of all the various CVAP Areas and components listed in this guidance in detail. The NS can assess its level of capacity for each of the CVA domains included in the self-assessment tool to enable the identification of the specific areas of CVA capacity that are strong and those that are weak, through a set of CVAP organisational indicators that are tiered across four Levels (1-3+).²²

The general objective of the OCAC process is twofold: first, to enable National Societies to assess their own organisational capacity, performance and relevance in their country so as to determine opportunities for self-development; and second, to ensure that all National Societies commit and comply with a comprehensive set of organisational minimal standards and thus to protect/improve the performance of the overall Federation network.

²⁰ The Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) process underwent changes in 2022 and has now been separated from the certification process, previously known as OCAC. OCA: Assesses a NS development needs and informs NS strategic development planning.

²¹ IFRC NSD Assessment & Development Processes Guidance

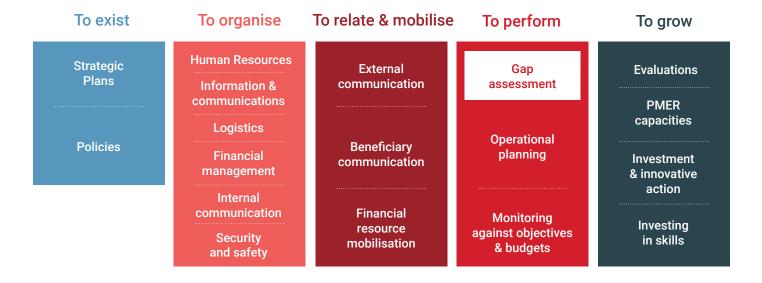
²² Guidance for Mainstreaming Cash and Voucher Assistance Cash Preparedness for Effective Response Movement CPWG 2020

Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool comparison.						
	The OCAC has:	The CVA Preparedness				
Themes	5 core capacities	5 Areas				
Sub-themes ²⁰	84 Attributes	55 Components				
Levels	Sliding scale B, C, D, E	Sliding scale 1,2,3,3+				
Unit of measure	Outcome indicators	Capacity indicators				

There are **18 capacity overlaps** between the OCAC Attributes and CVAP Components. See Annex 3 for a full list of the overlap by Attribute and Component. The overlaps are listed in Figure 2 under each of the 5 OCAC core capacities.

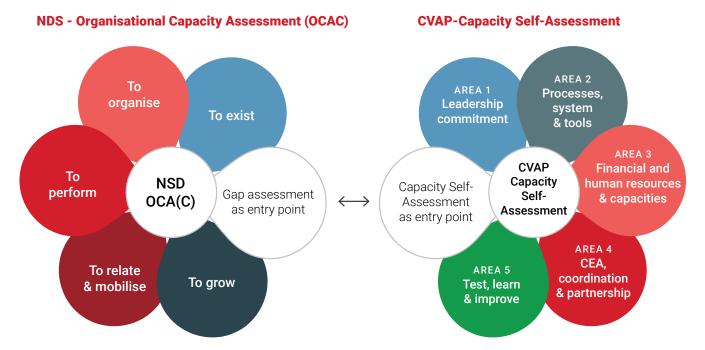
Figure 1 - 18 NSD - OCA Capacity Attributes overlapping with CVAP Components

The red box GAP ASSESSMENT under To Perform pillar indicates that for both processes, the identification of gaps is key. Id NSD and CVA Preparedness practitioners carry out gap assessments together, they are more likely to articulate joint ways of addressing these gaps.



The **Gap Assessment** in OCAC is essential for an understanding of the NS capacity to perform. This mirrors the CVA Preparedness Capacity Self-Assessment Tool, that measures capacity to deliver CVA. They both also allow a NS to assess its organisational capacity and measure progress over time. Each are organised around a list of thematic **capacities** required to perform a number of functions. The OCAC has **5 Capacities** and the CVAP has **5 Areas** – see Figure 2. Both include a self-assessment as the entry point for identifying gaps and areas that require investment.

Figure 2 - Linking NSD and CVAP Investments - starting with identifying performance capacity gaps²²



The 5 OCAC **capacities**²³ and are further broken down into 85 **Attributes**, each measured through a sliding scale rubric (levels B to E) of key outcome indicators.

The 5 CVAP **Areas** are further broken down into 54 **Components**, each scored through a sliding scale rubric (level 1,2,3,3+) indicating capacity.

²² Guidance for Mainstreaming Cash and Voucher Assistance Cash Preparedness for Effective Response Movement CPWG 2020

²³ OCAC Attributes and CVAP Components have no formal definitions, they are different ways of referring to the sub-themes under a specific OCAC Capacity or CVAP Area.

Identifying capacity gaps are the practical entry points for any CVAP investments being embedded in transformational processes supporting NSD principles, and not be focused on CVA delivery only. The following check list (Figure 3) can be applied by practitioners when CVAP investments are being considered, to ensure those selected are on track with NSD capacity strengthening investments.

Figure 3 - Check list to help ensure CVAP investments are embedded into NSD Capacity Strengthening for CVA Focal Points and NSD coordinator to apply jointly²⁴

Does the	CVA	Prepared	Iness	activity:
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1 Align with the NS Strategic Plans?

Inform and align with its own organisational development?

Address the short-term support often provided by partners to the NS

Increase preparedness for better delivery of CVA?

Encourage support to organisationwide systems (finance, reporting)

Support resource mobilsation strategies that maintain any short-term capacities generated by projects

If not, consider the following

If not, listen to the views of the NS leadership

If not, consider whether CVA Preparedness will add value to the NS identity and why/why not

If not, identify milestones that ensure gradual investment goals over 3-5 years

If not, shift the focus to making NS branches more operational, to help identify preparedness gaps

If not, set indicators for system-wide outputs and outcomes

If not, extend the CVA Preparedenss support to financial resource mobilisation capacities

With the overlaps identified, practitioners can work together to assess capacity gaps and ways to invest in these jointly where appropriate.

See Annex 4 for more checklists by CVAP area.

"We had to state it clearly – No response without development. Don't do disaster response without capacity strengthening. We want to develop minimum standards in all sectors to be functional and they develop. We need support transformation in the LRC, and we mean or-ganisational development support, not capacity strengthening to just pay for programme managers. We want to build long-term sustainable services" ²⁵

Georges Kettaneh, Secretary General Lebanese Red Cross

05 Key Recommendations

When designing NSD plans, consider if CVAP investments contribute to the following and viceversa, when embarking on CVAP with partners:



Ensure leadership buy-in from the start to align the OCA and CVA Preparedness self-assessment processes provide the opportunity for NSD and CVA teams to work together in identifying capacity gaps that need to be addressed for the NS to deliver on its strategy.



Always aim to support to strengthen longer-term financial sustainability provide strategic support to NS that include a sustainability strategy and resource mobilisation capacity to sustain any investments and assets so NS maintain them beyond project funding cycles.



Build on existing NS systems do not undermine them by "importing" systems to manage finances, reporting and due diligence in parallel.



Support the existing NS staffing structure for long-term capacity enhancement and unified systems. When employing staff or mobilising volunteers solely for partner projects, be mindful of using consistent salary grades, terms and conditions and leaving the knowledge and experience in the NS, even if not all project staff can be maintained long-term. Be mindful not to deplete the volunteer base for project needs.



Invest in documenting consistent examples of how NSD inputs lead to strengthened local structures and capacities.



Map out NSD support available from multiple partners to strengthen synergy, strategic contributions, gap analysis, and collective impact. Be sure to identify the contributions made by CVA Preparedness.

The following section provides examples of the key overlapping OCAC Attributes and CVAP Components with examples from NS.

06 Key NSD and CVAP investment areas of priority

A useful way to identify the synergies between NSD and CVAP is to link each of the five OCAC core capacities with CVAP Areas and Domains. Linking NSD and CVAP investments are a good starting point for aligning approaches.

Figure 4 - OCAC Core Capacities

To exist

To organise

To relate & mobilise

To perform

To grow

Identity and foundation of the NS, including its legal base, strategic lanning, policies, governance, Fundamental Principles and branch network. Systems, procedures, practices etc. that allow the NS to funtion effectively and efficiently in the areas of volunteer and staff management, security & safety, logistics, financial management, administration, legal etc.

Relationships with key internal and external stakeholders, both internal and external, and mobilisation of funds, volunteers etc. Planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting capacity for all of the NS activitities. Culture and practices allowing a NS to adapt to a changing environment and grow by learning and innovating.



1

OCAC Core Capacity: To Exist

This core capacity is at the heart of a NS identity and purpose. Where the NS has identified the use of the CVA modality in its activities, CVAP investments in NS Vision and Strategy development, update and uptake are key. Ideally strategic ambitions will be reflected in the NS Development Plans as well, so that it is easier to identify which priority areas CVAP investments can contribute to.

OCAC ATTRIBUTE 4 & 11: Strategic Plans & Policies



2

OCAC Core Capacity: To Organise

This core capacity spans over systems, tools, and resources (both human and financial) and allows the NS to deliver its activities in line with its plans and ambitions. Often a number of systems need to be invested in simultaneously, and failure to do so is likely to create bottlenecks in operations. Support services cannot be expected to scale up to meet new operational demands without adequate preparedness investments. This is what CVAP aims to do, to allow NS to strengthen their systems and capacities to perform.

OCAC ATTRIBUTE 38 TO 43: Financial Management



CVAP AREA 2

Component 2.2.a. Financial systems 2.2.b Accounting Systems; and CVAP Area 3 Component 3.1 Funding availability, release and replenishment capacity

A key area of NSD investment is in financial systems for a functional treasury management system, annual budget and expenditure authorisation process to cover all key transaction cycles and exceptions. The financial management system at HQ and all branches needs to be fully integrated with other systems and produce regular income and expenditure reports. CVAP investments can complement financial staff capacity as skills are transferrable and any CVA programmes should use existing finance teams and increase the number of staff if large programmes using cash modality are envisaged. Any financial capacity investment carried out as part of CVA Preparedness must be linked in with any NSD plan ongoing or planned finance development activities. This will enable capacity to scale up.

OCAC ATTRIBUTE 31: Information and Communication

Technologies (ICT) and 32: ICT Communications capacities



CVAP AREA 3

Component 2.3 Infrastructure, equipment and technology; and Component 3.5.e. ICT CVA scale up capacity

Investments in **equipment and infrastructure** for NS daily activities are routinely budgeted out of programmes by NS. IT tools and systems need to be available for staff to perform many of their functions. Any ICT investment needs to link in with any organisational digital transformation work in ongoing or planned NSD plans. Preparedness investments in this area should have a long-term view of the capacity and equipment required by the NS and contribute to ensuring IT and IM skills are maintained in-house and scaled-up if necessary, when there is increased CVA programming. Data management is an increasingly important skillset for NS including data visualisation and reporting using live connectivity, the infrastructure and skills need to be in place and invested in regularly.

OCAC ATTRIBUTE 33:

Logistics - Procurement of goods and services & Contract Management



CVAP AREA 2

Component 2.2.d. Logistics and procurement systems; 2.2.e. Delivery mechanisms; and CVAP Area 3 Component 3.5.d. Logistics and procurement CVA scale-up capacity

CVAP investments in capacity to contract financial services providers, voucher procurement and security services are typical of CVA responses. Investments in NS logistics capacities for the delivery of both in-kind and cash and voucher modalities are often insufficient. CVAP investments here at branch level are essential.

3

OCAC Core Capacity: To Mobilise

This core capacity describes NS relationships. NSD is made possible through the NS relationship with a wide range of stakeholders, from its own volunteers to the government in its auxiliary role. There are a wide range of expectations to manage for the NS, and identifying the partnerships and external actors that will contribute to the NSD plan will be a key step towards making the right alliances and choices.

OCAC ATTRIBUTE 73:
Resource Mobilisation capacities



CVAP AREA 2 COMPONENT 2.2.C.

Financial resource mobilisation systems; and Area 3 Component 3.5.c. Financial resource mobilisation CVA scale up capacity Mobilising resources among donors and both development and emergency actors interested in CVA is an opportunity for many NS to grow in their CVAP ambitions. The level of investment to be ready to deliver CVA at scale is often underestimated. Funding opportunities for actors who are cash prepared are abundant, as this response modality grows among the humanitarian and development sector.

NSD through CVAP could help NS be in a better position by having the capacity to identify donor giving preferences and communicate with donors who have provided support in the past, as well as update donors on on-going activities and funding needs, and work in alignment of the NS strategic directions.



OCAC Core Capacity: To Perform

This core capacity focuses on the ability to deliver. If NSD investments in the other core capacities are in place, the NS should be more successful in the delivery of its plans.

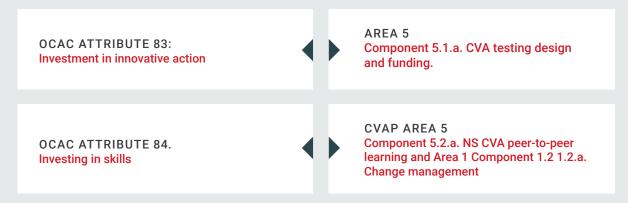


The Attribute of most relevance in this core area is the Gap Assessment mentioned in section four. PMER related actions that improve NS ability to have the necessary oversight of its activities and associated costs, are essential for the NS credibility and planning processes, as well as capacity to course correct when needed. Robust PMER and finance capacities are essential. CVAP does not invest in these systematically but can provide an opportunity to re-assess existing monitoring systems and IM capacities and refocus them to new operational needs.



OCAC Core Capacity: To Grow

This core capacity allows NS to adapt to changing contexts. NSD in this area is forward looking and very much linked to the NS assessment of its own capacity, role and vision for itself in its context.



CVA is still seen by some NS as an innovative approach, whilst for many it has become a standard programming tool. CVAP however, allows innovations in systems and tools and people skills that allow the NS to grow into new niche areas and access new funding opportunities. There are no lack of thematic options for NS growth, such as climate and environment, anticipatory action, health care, youth leading change, or growth by investing in branch capacity, sustainable community volunteer services, or partnerships.

Growth in capacity to deliver CVA often includes use of technology for registration and monitoring, use of different cash delivery mechanisms appropriate for different responses and types of affected households, and methods for participative programming and collecting feedback. Growth in CVA can also expand to the areas of needs assessments and feasibility assessments and scaling up social protection programmes in response to crises, if these are NS priorities. When delivering better services is an area of growth for the NS and part of its longer-term vision, NS led CVAP can be an opportunity to support NSD.

NS are responsible for their own development

While the implementation of cash and vouchers is an operational/programmatic capacity, cash preparedness investments build upon NS systems, processes and resources and have been seen to contribute to attracting financial resources, and are thus in line with NSD support principles⁹:

- NSD support must be aligned with the priorities of the National Society,
- NSD support shall be predictable, coherent and coordinated,
- NSD support shall be flexible and contribute to the sustainability of a National Society, and
- Special attention shall be given to NSD support in emergencies

Key Resources

- IFRC (2013a) Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance. Geneva. https://www.ifrc.org/document/principles-rules-humanitarian-assistance
- IFRC (2013b) National Society Development Framework. Geneva. https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/20200723_NSD_Framework_ONLINE_EN.pdf
- IFRC (2018a) Localisation: what it means and how to achieve it. External Policy Brief. https://reliefweb.int/report/world/ifrc-policy-brief-localization-what-it-means-and-how-achieve-it-cannot find an IFRC link
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- IFRC (2020b) Global Plan 2021. Geneva https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/GlobalPlan_2023.pdf
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- IFRC (2021) Localisation of humanitarian action in the RCRC NATIONAL SOCIETY
 DEVELOPMENT BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT, RESILIENCE
 AND PEACE. A longitudinal study on the effectiveness of support for National Society
 Development and its relevance for localization in 5 National Societies https://www.ifrc.org/document/study-localization-humanitarian-action-red-cross-red-crescent
- IFRC (2022) NS Development Policy https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/202201003_IFRC-NSD-Policy-EN.pdf
- IFRC OCAC mapping website https://data.ifrc.org/en/ocac

CVA and CVAP

- RCRC Movement (2020) Guidance for Mainstreaming Cash and Voucher Assistance Cash Preparedness for Effective Responses Theory of Change https://cash-hub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/01/EN_CVAP-Guidance_Theory-of-Change_v8.pdf
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- Cash maps interactive website https://cash-hub.org/resources/cash-maps/
- CVAP evaluation https://cash-hub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/10/Cash-Preparedness-Evaluation-Report-Executive-Summary-English.pdf
- CashCap/RCRC Movement Cash Hub (2020) Strengthening localisation through CVA preparedness https://cash-hub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/10/CVAPreparednessLocalisationReport_EN_50ct21.pdf
- Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream, Various Guidance Notes (2020)
 https://gblocalisation.ifrc.org/grand-bargain-localisation-workstream-2/guidance/
- Annexes