

# National Societies and their added value to cash coordination

Red Cross Red Crescent-National Societies add value to cash coordination through several key aspects:



## Unique Auxiliary Role and Partnerships

- National Societies, in their auxiliary role to governments, can leverage their established relationships to create significant partnership opportunities and entry points for cash assistance, with national and local authorities. The existing trust and connections with governments have been crucial when introducing cash assistance in new contexts. For instance, the Romania Red Cross leveraged the trust built during the COVID-19 pandemic to effectively implement cash assistance for the Ukraine refugee crisis. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, the National Society's auxiliary role enabled successful advocacy for the continuation of CVA activities in the Sahel and Centre-North regions, leading authorities to permit the use of e-vouchers despite a ban on cash.
- National Societies often play a pivotal role in bridging various sectors, like disaster management, early action and social protection, to enhance the overall effectiveness of humanitarian responses. The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) is a prime example of how National Societies can effectively support linkages with social protection systems. KRCS actively participated in the review of the national social protection policy that introduced a 4th pillar on Shock Responsive Social Protection. This new pillar has paved the way for humanitarian actors to establish linkages between their cash responses and social protection programmes. KRCS efforts have been widely recognized by partners like Social Protection Secretariat and donors such as ECHO.
- The experience of National Societies has often been crucial in aiding other organizations to grasp the intricacies of political dynamics and the context of political systems. Burkina Faso Red Cross experience engaging with governmental departments, from national to local level and a wide range of areas (Health, DM, Emergencies, etc) provides them valuable insights on how to effectively navigate systems, and the best times and methods for advocacy.

## Principled humanitarian action and experience



- The Movement's fundamental principles are at the heart of its mandate and act as enablers of any action. Kenya Red Cross Society is always guided by Neutrality and Independence when deciding whether should engage or not in a partnership or activity.
- The experience and good practices of National Societies serve as a reference for many organizations. They are often called to act where others cannot be, due to access or capacity constraints. In Burkina Faso, the National Society is the only actor to access certain areas and, apart of assisting people, also provides information and guidance to other humanitarian actors.

## National and International Structure and strengths



- National Societies operate at local, regional, and national levels, participating in coordination bodies across these tiers. They play a crucial role in facilitating the flow of information from national cash coordination working groups to regional and local branches, which then share it locally contributing to harmonisation of cash responses, enabling better informed responses at local level. From local to national level, information flow means the voice of local actors is represented and local practices and needs are shared.
- Community roots and presence through staff and volunteers that are deeply embedded within their communities, allowing them to be the first responders and last-mile deliverers in crises of all magnitudes. Their ongoing presence and local access enable them to provide direct information on contexts, understand community needs, and ensure accountability through active engagement. For instance, the Burkina Faso and Chad Red Cross are recognized as leading community-based organizations in their respective countries by authorities and UN agencies, a status that has attracted direct funding support through partnerships with UN agencies.
- National Societies also count with the support of the international network of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, which connects them to global trends and offers additional capacities and support when needed. This includes specific assistance for cash coordination from Movement members such as the IFRC, as seen in Indonesia in 2023, or through external partnerships like the response to the Türkiye and Syria earthquake in collaboration with CashCap. Additionally, through regional Movement Cash Communities of Practice, National Societies have access to valuable information and peer-to-peer technical support.
- Through their auxiliary role and long-term engagement with governments as permanent members of emergency coordination bodies, National Societies have demonstrated their capacity and earned a good reputation among governments and donors, as exemplified by the Kenya Red Cross. KRCS has actively engaged in and influenced policy reviews and development such as EWEA protocols and innovations in disaster management and response i.e. using CVA modalities or anticipatory actions. Additionally, their continuous presence on the ground fosters acceptance and trust within communities.



Cameroon Red Cross ©

## Capacity building and localization of global tools and standards



- The RCRC Movement has developed numerous technical guidelines and tools that National Societies have tailored to their specific contexts and shared with other actors. This adaptation prevents duplication and enhances efficiency. Sharing CVA experiences and tools, such as the Cash in Emergencies Toolkit, has been beneficial for other organizations. For instance, the National Society in Ecuador has customized these tools for local use by the entire cash community.
- Trainings provided by National Societies often include participation from partners, particularly government bodies that might otherwise lack access. For example, the Chad Red Cross cash focal point frequently serves as a cash facilitator for the cash working group. While in Indonesia, the National Society offers certified training programs for all actors in the country.
- National Societies often contribute human and logistical resources to coordination activities, such as data collection and monitoring. Without these resources, some activities could not be implemented, and certain difficult-to-access areas would remain unmonitored and without assistance. Kenya Red Cross Society plays a key role making possible the Joint Market Monitoring (JMM) by ensuring data collection in remote areas and IM capacity for analysis and reporting.



# Localisation and the contribution that National Societies can make through a leading role in cash coordination

## National level

Coordination is generally more structured and supported by national policies and frameworks. However, challenges include competing priorities, the need for integrated systems and over representation of international actors compared with national leads, among others.

## Regional level

Coordination varies significantly. Some regions have strong systems in place, while others lack resources and capacity. Opportunities include leveraging regional networks and sharing best practices.

## Local level

Local coordination often faces the most challenges due to limited resources, lack of trained personnel, and logistical issues. However, local knowledge and community engagement present significant opportunities for effective implementation of cash.

## The role NS can play in supporting localization includes:

Leadership and advocacy for the importance of cash coordination and lead by example. Foster a sense of ownership and collaboration among all stakeholders.

Motivate other national actors to invest time, effort, and engagement in cash coordination highlighting the benefits of effective cash coordination, such as improved efficiency, reduced duplication, and better outcomes for beneficiaries.

Provide technical support and guidance to local branches and local partners.

Facilitate data sharing to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity.

Promote a people centred approach for cash engaging with local communities to understand their needs and ensure their participation in the process.

Ensuring Appropriate Capacity of staff/ representatives.

- *Strengthen internal capacity by building the capacity of local branches and volunteers, implementing comprehensive training programs tailored to different levels of staff.*
- *Support external capacity building providing training and resources to build the capacity of national actors.*
- *Encourage continuous learning and professional development.*
- *Ensure adequate resources are allocated for capacity building.*
- *Establish mentorship programs and provide ongoing support.*

# Driving Localisation Forward: The Impact of Embedded CashCap Expertise

One of CashCap's workstreams focuses on strategic capacity-building support in cash coordination, design, and implementation, aiming to strengthen the capabilities of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies.

As part of a pilot programme launched in 2022, two CashCap experts were embedded within and worked closely with the Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). This initiative later expanded with additional deployments in Turkey and Chad.

Key findings from an external evaluation of the pilot deployments revealed the following:

The deployments significantly enhanced the visibility and empowerment of both National Societies, aligning with the goals of localisation. They played a key role in positioning SARC and URCS within external coordination platforms - particularly the Cash Working Groups (CWGs). Notably, URCS was elected co-chair of the Ukraine CWG in December 2022.

While not the sole factor in capacity development, the pilot was unanimously recognised as a major contributor to strengthening the ability of both National Societies to deliver quality cash at scale and to effectively coordinate CVA efforts.

Staff capacity was further strengthened through a comprehensive approach that combined teaching, mentoring, joint capacity-building activities, and high-quality feedback and reporting.

An unintended but positive outcome of the pilot was the improved internal coordination between the National Societies and their Partner National Societies.

This programme and the opportunity to embed a CashCap expert offers a unique value proposition for National Societies. While primarily benefitting National Societies, this model also supports broader localisation efforts by promoting more inclusive and locally led coordination mechanisms.

# Actions by global leads and external actors that could contribute to strengthen localised cash coordination

Through the research time, key informants provided some recommendations and example of actions that could reinforce local cash coordination.

- Clarify the space for cash coordination in the global humanitarian coordination space, positioning CWG as transversal to all sectors.
- IASC coordination caucus to prioritize the tripartite leadership model based on one UN and two civil society organization's structure, to enhance localization and role of local actors.
- Allocate resources to establish cash coordination systems and to scale up these in case of emergencies when more dedication and thematic subgroups are needed.
- Develop and fund the roll out of a dedicated cash coordination training that includes also soft skills, leadership and coordination skills development, to enable active local participation in the CWG (national, regional and local).
- Remove language barriers and exclusion of local actors, ensure coordination meetings are held in local language. Meetings to be in person, internet is still a challenge in many places.
- Effective coordination requires coordination at local level and efforts to be placed in activating local working groups, until now the focus has been on national coordination.
- Engage the governments departments in cash coordination spaces, beyond just participation, facilitate joined technical solutions, programmes development and coordination. Link social protection issues and cash involving governments, given their leading role in these matters.
- Support building national or regional interoperable information systems. Establish robust information systems managed locally, secured data exchange and consolidated information to facilitate coordination and avoid duplication.
- Gather evidence and co-create cash learning and tools together with the local actors.



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Cash coordination significantly benefits National Societies, as highlighted by this research. Initially, the focus was on how National Societies could contribute to cash coordination. However, as the research progressed, it became clear that coordination efforts also offer direct advantages and reveal opportunities for National Societies when they engage in cash coordination. Some of these are summarized below.



Learnings from National Societies in their process of becoming leaders of cash working groups



Opportunities for National Societies when engaging in cash coordination



## Methodology

Information has been compiled through interviews and structured data collection forms from National Societies cash focal points and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) regional CVA coordinators and representatives.

This learning document and gathering of examples will be reviewed and added to on an ongoing basis by a newly established cash coordination working group.

## More information and contributions

We would like to continue building on this series with new materials based on National Societies experience. If you have relevant Red Cross Red Crescent experiences related to Cash Coordination that can contribute to this area, please contact Andra Gulei, Cash Hub adviser and lead researcher for this report by email [andragulei@redcross.org.uk](mailto:andragulei@redcross.org.uk).