



Cash and Voucher Assistance Lessons Learned Workshop Report

Ukraine and Impacted Countries Crisis

14 – 16 May 2024, Budapest

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Introduction

Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) has been crucial in the IFRC network's response to the vast humanitarian needs resulting from the international armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

CVA-based activities include a variety of support options. For instance, where markets are functioning, multi-purpose cash grants empower people by providing the dignity and independence to purchase what they need most, based on their personal circumstances. Sector-specific cash interventions — covering areas such as shelter, health, and education — allow Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) National Societies to deliver targeted and efficient aid to those affected by the crisis. By conducting needs assessments to determine where assistance is most necessary and effective, RCRC National Societies ensure that the support provided directly addresses the needs, leading to the best outcomes for affected communities.

Since the launch of the IFRC Ukraine and Impacted Countries Crisis Emergency Appeal, the IFRC has coordinated the complex process of supporting the launch and management of multi-country CVA programmes among different national contexts, currencies, ways of fund transfer, and legal regulations. 16 out of the 18 National Societies under the IFRC Ukraine and Impacted Countries Emergency Appeal have implemented 45 different CVA programmes¹ supported by the IFRC across various sectors, including but not limited to cash for shelter, health, education, social protection, and winterisation. For instance, the Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS) has implemented three nationwide, large-scale cash projects² in partnership with several government ministries. The extensive financial and technical support of the IFRC and its Membership has enabled the URCS to become a key partner and service provider for harmonised CVA interventions across the country.

Utilizing technology to expand our reach, in April 2022 the IFRC launched a digital self-enrolment model to streamline the enrolment process for people needing assistance due to the Ukraine crisis. This model integrates online data collection, automated verification, fraud prevention tools, metadata analysis, global financial service providers for payments, and communication interfaces. It allowed National Societies new to CVA to quickly enrol and provide cash assistance to displaced Ukrainians. In March 2023, an improved version called AccessRC was launched, featuring improved fraud controls, in-app messaging, recognition of numerous identification documents, and information presented in dozens of languages.

The scale of the CVA interventions in response to the international armed conflict in Ukraine is anticipated to result in the largest cash distribution program ever implemented by the IFRC network.

¹ [IFRC Federation-Wide Two-Year Report: Ukraine and Impacted Countries Crisis](#), p. 30-31.

² *Idem*, p. 29.

Overview of the Workshop

The CVA Lessons Learned Workshop took place in Budapest, Hungary, between May 14-16, 2024. The workshop provided a platform for representatives from National Societies in the Europe and Central Asia Region, ICRC, and IFRC to share experiences, challenges, and successes of CVA programming and activity implementation in response to the ongoing humanitarian crises in the region, with the majority of its focus on the response to the international armed conflict in Ukraine. There were seven key thematic areas covered during the workshop, which included; Digital Systems & Tools, Agreements with Financial Service Providers, Community Engagement and Accountability, Internal and External Coordination, Multipurpose Cash, Sectoral Cash and Cash Preparedness.

Additionally, the IFRC CVA team introduced participants to the latest version of the self-registration application, AccessRC, emphasising its potential to streamline Red Cross service delivery beyond the self-registration for CVA support function. The workshop also addressed the CVA Preparedness programme, which aims to enhance National Societies' capacity to deliver timely and accountable CVA on a large scale. This included the further discussions on the initiatives and plans of the CVA Community of Practice (CoP) for Europe and Central Asia. The workshop offered a significant space for sharing experiences and discussing the successful implementation of Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) in CVA and explored its positive impact on programmes.

Workshop Objectives

1. To facilitate an in-depth exploration of insights, best practices, and lessons learned from CVA programmes implemented in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the ongoing international armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine.
2. To engage National Societies and IFRC teams in collaborative discussions to improve coordination and cooperation of CVA initiatives and knowledge-sharing within the Europe and Central Asia region.
3. To extract and document key learnings and best practices from the response to the international armed conflict in Ukraine to inform future CVA interventions of National Societies in the Europe and Central Asia region.
4. To strengthen capacities among participants to effectively implement CVA initiatives, integrating lessons learned from the response to the conflict in Ukraine.

The workshop welcomed participants representing a diverse range of stakeholders involved in the response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and Europe, as well as those from National Societies not directly involved in the response. The participant profile included:

1. Representatives of National Societies who are responding to the crisis under the IFRC Ukraine and Impacted Countries Emergency Appeal. CVA Focal Points from Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Türkiye, and Ukraine contributed significantly to the outcomes of the workshop, alongside other participants.
2. Representatives from National Societies in the Europe and Central Asia region not directly involved in the response under the Ukraine and Impacted Countries Emergency Appeal.
3. Representatives from the ICRC and Red Cross and Red Crescent Partner National Societies that have actively supported the responding National Societies under the IFRC Ukraine and Impacted Countries Emergency Appeal bilaterally or through cooperation with IFRC.
4. IFRC Europe and Central Asia Country/Country Cluster Delegations' CVA Delegates and IFRC Global Cash colleagues, including CVA experts on duty or deployed to IFRC within the Europe and Central Asia region.



Participants of the workshop. © IFRC

Methodology

The workshop was opened by the Regional Office for Europe CVA Coordinator, a representative of the American Red Cross, and the Regional Head for Health, Disasters, Climate & Crises.

The methodology of the workshop employed a combination of presentation, group work, and plenary discussions in order to create an interactive and collaborative learning environment.

During the three-day workshop, participants shared their experiences, learnings and discussed successes, challenges, and ways forward throughout seven different sessions. At the beginning of each session, workshop participants, including representatives from National Societies, IFRC, and Partner National Societies' staff, presented their experiences and insights on the topic. The following is the list of main topics and subtopics, along with the presenting participants, for all seven thematic sessions.



Group discussions, day two of the workshop. © IFRC

#	Main Topics and Sub-Topics	Presenters
1	Digital Systems and Tools 1.1. AccessRC Self-Enrolment model – V3, Global Rollout, and Other Use Cases 1.2. Registration and Application Tools – CVA Beneficiary Data Management 1.3. Use of EspoCRM for the Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Cross of Montenegro • Red Cross Society of the Republic of Moldova • 510 – An Initiative of the Netherlands Red Cross
2	Agreements with Financial Service Providers 2.1. Mapping, Establishing Agreements and Procurement Processes 2.2. Alignment of Implementation with Contracts and Internal Procedures 2.3. CVA Finance Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan • Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan • Ukrainian Red Cross Society • IFRC
3	Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) 3.1. CEA in CVA Case Study 3.2. Information Dissemination 3.3. Feedback in CVA: Setting up a Call Centre from Ground Zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulgarian Red Cross • Hungarian Red Cross
4	Cash Coordination 4.1. Movement Cash Coordination 4.2. Participating Effectively in Cash Working Groups 4.3. Aligning with Government/Social Protection Systems 4.4. Collaborating with the Community of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFRC • Ukrainian Red Cross Society • Turkish Red Crescent Society • Lithuanian Red Cross Society
5	Multipurpose Cash Assistance 5.1. Reflecting on First Phase/Emergency Response 5.2. Transfer Value Determination/Alignment 5.3. Deduplication/Coordination with Other Actors 5.4. Community Participation in Targeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polish Red Cross • Romanian Red Cross
6	Sectoral Cash Assistance 6.1. Cash for Health 6.2. Cash for Shelter 6.3. Cash for Protection and Other Sectoral CVA Projects 6.4. Optimising Beneficiary Data Management for Sectoral Cash Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slovak Red Cross • Turkish Red Crescent Society • 510 – An Initiative of the Netherlands Red Cross
7	Cash Preparedness 7.1. CVA Advocacy 7.2. Designation of CVA Focal Points 7.3. CVA Preparedness Self-Assessment Process 7.4. Standard Operating Procedures Development 7.5. Trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Red Cross • Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan • The Red Cross of Serbia

Participants were then divided into smaller groups to engage in guided discussions on key questions related to the session topic and specific sub-topics. This approach provided participants with an opportunity for sharing insights, exchanging perspectives, and collectively exploring challenges and solutions. In these breakout groups, workshop participants electronically documented all their key findings and recommendations using Kobo questionnaires that were prepared in advance by the workshop organisers for each session.

Guiding Questions for Group Discussions

1. What worked well? / What were the successes, achievements, and best practices?
2. What did not work well? / What are the continuing challenges and obstacles encountered?
(Every group should seek to identify 3-5 key challenges and difficulties related to the topic, along with detailing the nature and obstacles associated with each challenge.)
3. What solutions and mitigation measures are recommended or have been implemented to overcome and resolve these challenges? (Based on the challenges encountered, each group should identify detailed and practical and actionable solutions and suggestions to overcome these obstacles.)
4. What are the suggested courses of action recommended at various levels, plus the technical support and/or resources required? (Each working group should specify the type of actions required from each of the stakeholders, including the IFRC Secretariat, regional offices, clusters, country offices, national societies and their branches, partner national societies, technical teams, operational teams, and other relevant stakeholders.)

This was followed by facilitated sessions where representatives from each breakout group presented a summary of their findings and recommendations to the plenary. Participants from other breakout groups were encouraged to complement the findings, ensuring comprehensive discussions.

Each day of the workshop concluded with a session summarising the key findings, enabling participants to collectively reflect on lessons learned, provide any additional inputs, and collectively validate the findings.

To better ensure the workshop's effective overall functioning, participants could leave anonymous written feedback notes on the Feedback Parking Lot. Participants were also welcome to express their feedback directly to the facilitators if that was their preferred way. All feedback was addressed at the beginning of the next day, or immediately in case something urgent came up. At the end of day three of the workshop, participants were asked to electronically complete the Final CVA Lessons Learned Workshop Evaluation survey. The workshop concluded with closing remarks from the Regional CVA Coordinator and the Deputy Regional Director.

Findings of the Workshop

Digital Systems and Tools

1.1 AccessRC Self-Enrolment model – V3, Global Rollout, and Other Use Cases

Successes

- **Remote Enrolment:** Enabled registration of people affected from diverse remote areas without requiring them to visit RCRC branches.
- **Efficiency:** Reduced the need for extensive branch staffing or specific service points, resulting in cost and time efficiency for both the National Society and people affected. Rapid application process completed in less than two minutes, ensuring swift access for users.
- **User-Friendly Interface:** Generally user-friendly, facilitating ease of use for both staff and people affected.
- **Data Management:** Simplified data analysis and management, enhancing case management capabilities. Implementation of two-way authentication for enhanced data security.
- **Feedback Integration:** Incorporation of feedback into app improvements, introducing new features to enhance usability.
- **Sector Integration:** Utilisation of Access RC for diverse programmes beyond CVA, such as shelter, MSPSS, and health initiatives.
- **Automation:** Integration of other technologies like AI for automated reviews, reducing reliance on manual processes.

Challenges

- **Loss of Mobile Phone/Number and Password Forgetfulness:** Instances of lost mobile phones or forgotten passwords pose challenges for app users.
- **Trust in Apps:** Trusting in the reliability and security of the apps presents a challenge.
- **Support Service Bottleneck:** Bottlenecks in support service provision for the apps, particularly at higher regional levels or with limited staffing, pose operational challenges.
- **Accessibility Barriers:** Older people and people who are not proficient in digital tools face difficulties in completing self-registration or navigating Access RC, highlighting accessibility to support issues.
- **Digital Divide:** The lack of capacities or smartphones among the communities in vulnerable situations challenges their participation in the registration process, exacerbating disparities.
- **Migration of Data:** The launch and version updates of the app have led to data migration difficulties and impacted Standard Operating Procedures, particularly in the initial stages. Manual processes prior to the digital transition posed challenges.
- **Lack of Notification:** Non-receipt of notifications to National Societies regarding new version launches creates communication gaps.
- **GDPR Concerns:** Concerns regarding GDPR compliance, particularly regarding the registration of information and sectoral data, persist as a challenge that requires careful consideration and management.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Establishing a pathway for users to change their phone numbers** to address instances of lost or changed contact information.
- **Incorporating accessibility features** for blind users to ensure inclusivity and usability of the platform.
- **Ensuring verification of apps to instil trust and confidence among users**, potentially through app store authentication mechanisms. Implementing obligatory verification for both email and phone numbers to enhance security and reduce fraud.
- **Addressing issues with profile recognition**, particularly in cases where multiple profiles within the same family exist, by developing real-time solutions to identify and resolve potential fraud cases.
- **Designating focal points for addressing and resolving user issues**, ensuring efficient problem-solving mechanisms.
- **Providing alternative registration methods**, such as face-to-face registration in branches, to cater to communities in vulnerable situations lacking access to digital platforms.
- **Developing official guidelines for all National Societies on the usage of the application platform** at different levels to ensure standardised practices and procedures, including a regional Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). **Increasing**

lead time for notifications to National Societies before version changes to allow for adequate preparation and readiness.

- **Providing clear guidelines on GDPR and Data Protection Impact Assessment** to ensure transparency and compliance with data protection regulations in countries where National Societies are operating.

1.2. Registration and Application Tools – CVA Beneficiary Data Management

Successes

- **Centralised Approach:** Consistent processes across country branches, including deduplication and registration.
- **Data Integrity:** No data loss when using integrated systems and a common database.
- **Use of Alternative Digital Tools:** Microsoft Forms proved to be a more reliable alternative to Kobo Toolbox, which sometimes experienced data loss.
- **Effective Coordination:** Agreements with stakeholders and coordination with local authorities ensured smooth operations.
- **Efficient Information Dissemination:** Effective push of information to stakeholders and people who applied for support.

Challenges

- **Data Protection:** Ensuring data protection internally and complying with local data protection legislation was challenging.
- **Errors in Personal Data** leading to bank transaction issues and refunds.
- **Resource Constraints:** Lack of human resources and technical capacity hindered efficient operations.
- **Duplication Risks:** Risk of data duplication when using paper-based systems, and human errors in centralized Excel de-duplication processes.
- **Kobo Toolbox Issues:** Complications with using Kobo, perceived as complex by some volunteers, and language barriers for others.
- **Data Over-Collection and Slow Processing:** Tendency to collect excessive or unnecessary data increased error risks. Data processing was often slow and cumbersome.
- **Preparedness:** Some National Societies were not adequately prepared, struggling with setting up digital tools like Kobo and dealing with its free version limitations.
- **Impact of Sanctions in Some Countries:** Sanctions affected the ability for National Societies to use international tools and platforms.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Engaging with** Inter-Agency Cash Working Groups, local authorities, and communities.
- **Integrate CVA with** social protection mechanisms to avoid duplications.
- **Providing training** for staff and volunteers.
- **Secure technical and financial support for tools** like Kobo Toolbox.
- **Establish a fund for testing** digital solutions by National Societies.
- **Implementing double verification** processes and **introduce criteria for de-duplication**.
- **Using lists from trusted entities** to reduce registration workload.
- **Enhancing cybersecurity measures** in Standard Operating Procedures to protect data.
- Addressing delays in paper registration by encouraging the development of internal digital tools and **considering self-registration tools like AccessRC**.
- **Raising funds for National Society preparedness** in registration and data management.

1.3. Use of EspoCRM for the Operation

Successes

- **Strong Acceptance:** Gained widespread acceptance from National Society management.
- **Faster Registration:** Significantly expedited the registration of those who applied for support process.
- **Enhanced Transparency:** Improved transparency through comprehensive documentation of changes.
- **Clear Roles and Responsibilities:** Facilitated segregation of roles and responsibilities (e.g., CEA focal points, case managers).
- **Centralised Data Management:** Provided a central database, improving data protection and enabling deduplication.
- **Technical Support:** Technical support from the 510 team ensured smooth operation and quick issue resolution.
- **User-Friendly Interface:** Featured a user-friendly and adaptable interface, contributing to high user satisfaction.
- **Data Visualisation:** Offered strong data visualisation capabilities for enhanced data analysis and CEA improvements.

Challenges

- **Training and Access:** Time required for training volunteers and processing access requests for EspoCRM. National Societies cannot fully utilise the system without technical expertise.
- **Deduplication Issues:** Verification challenges due to Cyrillic documents and names.
- **Adaptability:** In order to maintain consistency across numerous projects and NS users, there is a need to keep the system unified. No integration with Financial Service Providers (FSPs).
- **IT-Related Issues:** Dependency on technical expertise, making it hard for National Societies to take full control. Need for an IT/IM team for adaptations and maintenance.
- **Communication Limitations:** Limitation on text message lengths, causing misunderstandings amongst the target population. Some target population did not understand the consent question, indicating a need for clearer messaging and more CEA efforts.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Increasing the platform's adaptability** to meet the program needs of National Societies.
- **Ensuring authorised program documentation** with physical or digitalised signature submission.
- **Improving deduplication capabilities** within the tool.
- **Ensuring EspoCRM is hosted and supported** technically by the IFRC.
- **Providing extensive training** on system management and its features for users and National Society representatives.
- **Centralising the platform and setting** contribution requirements for National Societies.
- **Using IT services** provided by external parties.
- **Building digital literacy capacity** in National Societies and **securing funding for** capacity building and system maintenance.

Agreements with Financial Service Providers (FSP)

2.1. Mapping, Establishing Agreements and Procurement Processes

Successes

- **Well-Organised Procurement Processes:** Created Terms of Reference (TOR) for procurement. Clearly established tender procedures and technical specifications requests. Coordination with other actors to understand

Challenges

- **Availability and Interest of FSPs:** Limited availability of FSPs and high commission fees. FSPs often uninterested or unaware of potential service involvement with the Red Cross. Lack of technical and human resource capacity in National Societies to engage and proceed with FSPs. FSPs' reluctance

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Engaging with FSPs early** on, sharing plans and information about National Society operations, learning from previous experience.
- **Explaining to FSPs on how to navigate** IFRC/ National Society **procurement processes** and understand terms.

FSP presence and services. Ensured all departments involved in operations worked on TORs jointly.

- **Framework Agreements:** Established multiple framework agreements with FSPs (both long and short terms), banks, pharmacies, supermarkets, and post offices. Preferential long-term contracts with FSPs to allow scaling up. Incorporated clauses allowing other Movement partners to use the same agreements. Maintained flexibility in framework agreements to allow amendments and extensions.
- **Advocacy:** Advocated with FSPs to explain mandates and processes. Effective advocacy led to increased FSP cooperation. In Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, FSPs supported CVA without cost after the earthquake. During COVID-19 in the UK, banks became more cooperative due to high business levels. A food voucher supplier built a micro-platform for National Societies, leading to significant success and becoming a major voucher supplier in Europe.

to use IFRC standard contracts due to bureaucratic demands. Reluctance from big banks due to unclear business levels and issues with prepaid card market cooperation (case of UK).

- **Procurement Process Issues:** Bottlenecks related to understanding of the local and/ or IFRC procurement process in some National Societies. Changes in agreements with FSP without following proper procurement processes. Inefficiency if branches conduct their own procurement and agreements.

- **Organising regular meetings** with FSPs and continuous updating of agreements.
- **Sharing knowledge with finance, logistics and procurement teams** within National Societies about CVA.
- **Simplifying IFRC procurement procedures** to prevent delays and barriers and adapting to the context where National Society is operating.
- **Maintaining clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), contingency plans, and templates** for IFRC procurement.
- **Conducting training and capacity building** on procurement processes for National Societies.
- **Supporting National Societies** by following their procurement processes and helping establish new ones if needed.
- **Signing agreements with several FSPs** to ensure flexibility and choice to deliver CVA to people affected on time.
- **Conducting dry-Run Process with FSPs when signing contracts;** Testing new types of distribution in the form of digital wallets, e-vouchers etc.
- **Searching for new FSPs** as new partners and opportunities.

2.2. Alignment of Implementation with Contracts and Internal Procedures

Successes

- **MoneyGram Global Contract:** Effective use in National Societies without existing FSP agreements.
- **Service Fees:** No FSP service fees in Serbia and Romania.
- **Local FSP Relationships:** Successful relationship building.
- **Framework agreements:** IFRC support in establishing framework agreements in line with National Societies' procedures. FSPs provided

Challenges

- **Coordination with External Actors:** Coordination with government bodies like municipalities were complicated. Misalignment between IFRC tender procedures and bank rules.
- **Internal Coordination:** Lack of participatory approach within the Movement in selecting MoneyGram. Long periods to launch programs and make payments without framework agreements.
- **Restrictions and Limitations Imposed by FSPs:** Restrictions from banks, for example, Moldovan

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Testing FSPs** before launching the programme.
- **Mapping and using multiple FSPs** for different areas and services.
- **Establishing framework agreements with FSPs before crises/** starting FSPs contract processes as part of CVA preparedness in National Societies.
- **IFRC Regional/Country Offices to support National Societies in negotiating** with potential FSPs based on context and disaster.
- **Updating existing SOPs** for different cash payment methods.

services according to agreements without delays and were flexible. Successful negotiations and support from IFRC Regional and Cluster offices.

- **Ability to use different FSPs** in one program not to leave anyone behind and following inclusive approach and also in parallel active programs to speed up payments and reduce FSP overloading.

banks did not accept driver's licenses. Limited national coverage by FSPs. Issues with MoneyGram accepting name changes due to typos, adding a burden on NS. Local FSPs not using APIs, making integration difficult. Misalignment of MoneyGram staff behaviour with fundamental principles. Data management issues with new FSPs storing data on their own platforms, causing GDPR compliance issues. Territory coverage issues and crowded pick-up points for MoneyGram. Older people found it challenging to collect money without being accompanied.

- **Ensuring FSPs provide monthly reports** on funding usage (e.g., vouchers).
- **National Societies establishing** their own contracts or framework agreements with several FSPs.
- **Adapting pick-up dates and times to avoid crowds and providing clear instructions** for people affected on how to pick up money by **involving CEA** as early as programme planning.
- **Providing sensitisation training to FSP staff** to avoid inappropriate behaviour towards beneficiaries.
- **Advocating to senior management for FSP** agreements and their advantages.
- **Use of one single data base** to track payment statuses, deduplicate and simplify the monitoring process.

2.3. CVA Finance Processes

Successes

- **IFRC Direct Cash Transfers to People Affected:** Efficient cash transfer management processes managed by IFRC for RFPs, reconciliation, sweepbacks and approvals, allowing National Societies to focus on other areas as part of check and balance functionality
- **Successful Implementation of Functional Internal control Mechanisms:** Compliance with finance regulations, applicable laws and regulations, back donor requirements, contracts and agreements segregated duties and responsibilities. Proper documentation and records for multiple CVA programs.
- **National Society Transfers to People Affected:** Easy approval processes, ownership of the transfer is within the National Society.
- **Understanding of Transfer Flow:** Red Cross Red Crescent staff generally understand the process of transferring funds as part of cash transfer cycle.

Challenges

- **Earmarking of Funds:** Funding can be spent only for specific programmes, no flexibility. Earmarking restrictions per country/per activity.
- **Delays:** Some pledges came in late. Procurement processes for FSPs took more time than anticipated.
- **Local Tax Policies and Extra Fees:** Issues with tax policies and high exchange rates and fees from banks.
- **Understanding of IFRC Direct Transfers:** IFRC direct cash transfer processes (including the RFP process) to affected people via the FSP were not always clear for National Society staff.
- **Communication with FSPs:** Issues with FSP communication, especially regarding cancelling transfers which were made to the beneficiaries who did not pick up the funds or for any other exceptional situations which may occur and require some agile actions to be taken by FSP.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Sharing knowledge on cash transfers** with the National Society programme staff on the entire process, including collecting signatures, preparing payment documents, sending money, and final reconciliation.
- **Ensuring international FSPs under IFRC contracts offer** reduced fees at the local level for National Societies.
- **Collecting examples from other countries and advocating**, with IFRC support, for reduced taxes on providing cash transfers to affected people.
- **Promoting payment localisation** through National Societies procuring and using their own FSPs.
- **Well-prepared payment** schedule is quite essential to consider that enough time is given to finance and thus, to FSP to have funds in place to distribute to the recipients on timely manner.

- **Pre-approval processes in place** before the transfer. I.e., payment processing and review before the funds are received by the beneficiaries.
- **Activities segregated by donors** using RedRose and/or other CRM systems for parallel programs.
- **Obstacles with FSP financial data systems:** Ex-traction of data problems, access to the platform issues, delays on getting feedback on documents needed or to solve the issues etc.

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

3.1. CEA's role in the success of CVA programs and Community Feedback

Successes

- **Enhanced Community Reach:** CEA implementation from the start ensures broader community reach and proper dissemination of information. People affected are informed how to contact National Societies via different channel.
- **Community Involvement:** Hiring affected community members as programme staff or volunteers facilitates programme quality and implementation.
- **Immediate Response:** National Society call centres provide immediate response to feedback and inquiries from people affected.
- **Digitalisation of CEA through AccessRC:** Structured information collection and addressing feedback, making help timelier and more accessible. Information about Red Cross Red Crescent services and CVA selection criteria provided in local languages through preferred channels.
- **Adaptability and Direct Contact:** Programmatic adjustments based on feedback, including selection criteria, transfer amount. Ensuring personal contact with people affected and Red Cross and Red Crescent staff was important in the Ukraine context for active community engagement. Two-way communication ensured trust in National Society.

Challenges

- **Adapting to New Tools and Methods:** Challenges with following new processes and using new tools.
- **Budget and Financial Constraints:** Establishing CEA mechanisms can be costly, for example having dedicated human resources for CEA.
- **Community Participation:** Difficulty convincing communities to participate.
- **Social Media Misuse:** Ineffective use of proper channels, social media channels may be misused by communities.
- **Misunderstandings in printed or written information dissemination:** Misinterpretations in written communication risk damaging the reputation of NS. For example, rejection messages included the word "fraud," causing offense.
- **Traditional vs. Digital Communication:** Explaining rejections is easier in person than via SMS. Some marginalised groups cannot be reached with digital tools due to limited access and are left behind.
- **Non-Consideration of Community Feedback:** Programme staff did not always consider or act on feedback shared by community directly or via call centres.
- **Handling Sensitive Feedback:** National Society volunteers required systems and more training on how to handle sensitive feedback.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Analysing community context and using the most appropriate wording** for rejection messages to avoid misinterpretations and maintain reputation of National Societies.
- **Ensuring capacity building** of National Society staff at all levels from the start of the crisis.
- **Contextualising help** by involving more local community members in CVA programming.
- **Having human resources responsible** for referrals, meetings, and feedback loop closure.
- **Coordinating with other stakeholders** and NGOs for information sharing.
- **Complementing other information channels** with community meetings.
- **Closing feedback loops** for building trust and ensuring programme success and ensuring that feedback leads to programmatic changes.
- **Utilising multiple platforms:** social media, community meetings, AccessRC, National Society website.
- **Training staff and volunteers** in order to ensure knowledge on program criteria, timelines, and CEA.
- **Updating referral pathways for feedback management** and keeping informative documents accessible.
- **Including personal contact** alongside digital methods and ensuring continuous two-way communication.

- **Capacity Building:** Use of digital technologies and innovations serves as capacity building for National Societies.
- **Innovative Feedback Collection:** Use of QR codes and Kobo Toolbox forms for collecting feedback.
- **Feedback Data Management and Follow-Up:** Direct contact with people affected and focus group discussions improved program eligibility and provided cultural insights for better programming. Use of EspoCRM for handling community feedback. Following-up with communities via call centers and by conducting Post Distribution Monitoring.
- **Collection of Irrelevant Information:** Some Post Distribution Monitoring surveys and Focal Group Discussions included irrelevant to the programme questions.
- **Language Barriers:** Difficulty in communicating with people affected due to language differences.
- **Promoting feedback mechanisms** and interlinking FSP call centres with National Societies help-lines.
- **Shortening surveys by focusing** on relevant questions. Involving different sectors in feedback collection and survey preparation.
- **Training volunteers** on feedback collection and management.
- **Using Artificial Intelligence** tools to overcome language barriers and identifying community languages before launching the programme.

3.2. Information as aid before/during and after CVA programmes

Successes

- **Website Development:** National Societies had CVA websites with essential information with 510 support.
- **Simplified Communication:** Reduced use of acronyms and abbreviations in public communications.
- **Interdepartmental Collaboration:** Improved cooperation between communications, CVA, and CEA teams.

Challenges

- **Political Sensitivity:** Disseminating information on cash assistance can be sensitive and politicised; maintaining neutrality is crucial.
- **Access and Equity:** Information within communities may reach the same target group repeatedly, leaving out others who lack access to information.
- **Reputational Risks:** Limited funds led to partial information dissemination, risking the organisation's reputation.
- **Capacity Constraints:** Not all National Societies have dedicated CEA and communications support, overburdening cash/programme personnel.
- **Fragmented Information:** Inconsistent information dissemination due to multiple channels and actors within and between countries.
- **Search Visibility:** Poor visibility of resources like apps and cash hubs on local Google searches.
- **Programme Exit Communication:** Challenges in effectively communicating the closure of programmes.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Including Communications and CEA staff** in initial discussions when planning programmes.
- **Offering continuous engagement of communities through AccessRC** with options for consent as people move between countries. Continue developing Access RC to unify NS staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries on a single platform.
- **Using printed materials, newspapers, radio, and billboards alongside** digital platforms.
- **Planning communications for programme exit**, providing referrals to other services.
- **Keeping information simple and working with volunteers** to share information in-person to communities rather than relying solely on written materials.
- **Developing protocols** to ensure inclusive information dissemination targeting all vulnerable groups.

3.3. Understanding the communities to shape CVA programs

Successes	Challenges	Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs Assessment and Adjustment of Programmes: National Societies adjusted initial operational strategies based on needs assessment results and community feedback. • Few National Societies conducted needs analyses to understand marginalized groups, such as the Roma community. • Volunteer Support: Volunteer support was crucial in disseminating information and collecting feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Partnerships for criteria identification: Issues with other stakeholders, including partners, having inconsistent criteria and lack of IFRC network coordination to solve this. • Limited Control Over Government-Led Programmes. • Strategic Communication: Difficulty responding to large-scale emergencies with low promotion of CVA. • Local Population Dissatisfaction: Initiatives targeting only displaced people resulted in dissatisfaction among local communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing clear and understandable guidelines and criteria identification processes among Movement partners. • Ensuring transparency on websites and other communication channels. • Defining communication channels and methods before starting programmes. • Ensuring a common approach across all local branches. • Maintain clear and timely communication to people affected throughout the programme.

Cash Coordination

4.1. Movement Cash Coordination

Successes	Challenges	Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Efforts: Close cooperation between IFRC and ICRC for division of cash operations. Effective geographical coordination. Joint Post Distribution Monitoring across National Society branches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Coordination Structure: Initially, there was no established coordination structure amongst Movement components. Lack of a clear understanding of what coordination and cooperation should entail. • Reliance on Personal Relationships: Coordination relied heavily on personal relationships rather than a formal structure. • Human Resource Constraints: Lack of dedicated human resources specifically for coordination purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing pre-agreements for collaboration with National Societies involving, Partner National Societies, IFRC and ICRC. • Utilising regional Community of Practice (COP)/ Cash Working Groups (CWG) to minimise coordination gaps among Movement components. • Considering additional human resources for operation or surge coordination support. • Appointing a Movement Coordination Operational Delegate to strengthen coordination efforts.

4.2. Participating Effectively in Cash Working Groups (CWGs)

Successes	Challenges	Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced Awareness and Coordination within the Country: Improved connections with humanitarian aid clusters and government entities. Improved understanding of local FSPs used and the Minimum Expenditure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy: Difficulty advocating for Red Cross cash programmes at the local level. • Operational Delays: Delays in delivering cash to people affected despite the in-country presence of large INGO actors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring CWGs have a local actor as co-chair and motivating National Societies to take the lead in coordination. • Engaging with governments to strengthen the auxiliary role of National Societies.

Basket (MEB). Clear understanding of the roles and activities of various organisations.

- **Duplication Prevention:** Creation of a duplication matrix to avoid overlapping efforts.
- **Opportunity for strengthened advocacy** for CVA programming.
- **Ukraine-specific Achievements:** Targeting criteria was agreed upon socio-economic vulnerability in Eastern Ukraine. Guidance and a harmonized approach prepared by CWG (including assessment and PDM templates). Collaborative efforts in addressing fraud cases.

- **Barriers Coordinating with INGOs:** Language barriers for national actors. Overpowering influence of iNGO actors. INGOs sometimes not understanding the local culture or context. Issues with Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) with UNHCR at the local level.
- **Coordination Challenges:** Differences in discussion topics between internal and external organisations. High expectations for co-chairs. Managing diverse interests and expectations. Issues with data sharing, politics, neutrality, and internal vs. external coordination.

- **Encouraging National Societies to provide local knowledge** and leadership while maintaining strong government links.
- **IFRC and National Societies sharing CWG participation experiences** with Communities of Practice.
- **Harmonising internal** (Partner National Societies, local branches) and external coordination.
- **Advocating for the importance of coordination** with internal and external stakeholders among NS leadership.

4.3. Aligning with Government/Social Protection Systems

Successes

- **Integration and Collaboration:** Turkish Red Crescent, for example, worked directly with the government, aligning CVA programming with government systems from the beginning. In general, CVA programming alignment with government initiatives facilitated acceptance from the government and other organizations. This alignment helped in advocacy and linking to other national social protection programmes. Collaborating with the government has helped identify those in need, aligning transfer amounts to reduce tensions among people receiving support.
- **Protection and Training:** Conducting Protection, Gender and Inclusion trainings (PGI) to people working on registering people affected for support, including volunteers and government officials.

Challenges

- **Selection Criteria and CVA Programming:** Different selection criteria than the government required investing time in discussions and negotiations. Government recommendations sometimes conflicted with RCRC priorities, such as changing transfer values or targeting criteria.
- **Tensions and Coordination:** Working with people not registered by the government could create tensions. Coordination with different government entities was sometimes difficult.
- **Taxation and Sector-Specific Cash Concerns:** Taxation of humanitarian aid was an issue. Some governments (e.g., Moldova) were not in favour of cash for specific sectors, like health, due to fears of corruption and misuse.
- **Registration and Protection Concerns:** Government-led registration raised protection concerns, as not everyone conducting registration was properly trained in PGI and PSEA.
- **Data Protection and Sharing:** Data protection and sharing restrictions led to delays in implementation.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Creating SOPs/guidelines related to data protection** to expedite CVA implementation.
- **Coordinating with the government from the beginning** and understand the local social protection system.
- **Establishing and coordinating referral systems** with government and other organisations.
- **IFRC interventions implemented through National Societies.**
- **Increasing exchange of experiences and sharing best practices** in targeting and referral pathways to national social protection systems.
- **Promoting peer-to-peer learning** and advocacy messages about CVA.

4.4. Collaborating with the Community of Practice (COP)

Successes

- **Active Working Group:** Establishment of an active working group with ample experience shared among members. Examples shared by different National Societies within the group proved to be beneficial. Peer-to-peer support and ability to express and receive advice within the IFRC network.
- **Structured meetings** based on subjects deemed most interesting by National Societies.
- **National Societies taking the lead in CVA** initiatives, including COP.

Challenges

- **Sustainability and Participation:** Challenges in making the COP sustainable, especially after IFRC staff presence in-country decreases. Limited time to dedicate to the COP, as it may not be a priority due to other engagements. Difficulty in making the COP more interactive and engaging.
- **Hesitancy among National Societies to reach out** to other focal points to obtain necessary information.
- **Challenges in using international/regional experiences due** to sanctions on FSPs in certain countries.
- **Language barriers and time constraints** affecting participation of all focal points.
- **Lack of dedicated personnel for CVA** in some National Societies.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Sharing good examples of CVA** to showcase its positive influence for National Society leadership to obtain support for full-time CVA focal point positions.
- **Delegating attendance at COP meetings** to manage time and resources, possibly to other qualified NS personnel or based on meeting topics.
- **Considering alternative meeting formats** beyond online sessions. For example, facilitating face-to-face meetings to ease communication and encourage participation.
- **Providing a comparative overview of CVA programmes implemented by different National Societies** for direct collaboration and support.
- **Reviewing meeting structures to ensure they provide added value** and facilitate relevant information exchange.

Multipurpose Cash Assistance

5.1. Reflecting on First Phase/Emergency Response

Successes

- **Digitalisation:** Usage of Pidtrimka in Ukraine and AccessRC digital tools resulted in efficient aid provision and scaling up of operations.
- **Human Resources and Capacity Building:** To implement CVA programmes National Societies hired new staff, particularly displaced people from Ukraine. Implementing CVA meant building National Societies' capacity in CVA, CEA, and PGI.
- **Collaboration:** Cooperation with other stakeholders in country. Support from IFRC.

Challenges

- **Adapting programmes** to community contexts.
- **National Society staff needed more time to gain skills in implementing CVA**, particularly those that had no experience in CVA.
- **Target Group Profile:** Not all people affected had opportunity and literacy to use digital tools.
- **Communication Barriers:** Language barriers and challenges in selecting effective communication channels.
- **Agreeing on the value** of assistance with other CWG/third-sector humanitarian partners.
- **Operational Challenges:** Adapting IFRC app features to local contexts. Limited human resources in CVA.
- **Donor-driven targeting approaches.**

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Developing CVA Preparedness (CVAP) initiatives** for future programmes to avoid crisis-time development.
- **IFRC to invest in National Societies' preparedness** capacity and delegate profiles.
- **Maintaining the CVA capacity achieved** by National Societies while responding to the international armed conflict in Ukraine.
- **Ongoing development of CVA** digital systems and tools already in place.
- **Advocating for fundraising at local and regional levels** for CVA.
- **Investing in coordination capacities** during peacetime (CWG).

- **Convincing National Society leadership** to shift from in-kind to cash support was challenging.
- **Sticking to emergency procedures** and timelines to avoid support delays.
- **Identifying the common communication channels** amongst people on the move or local communities in advance.
- **Incorporating cash programming into** core National Society services.
- **Training National Society staff regularly** on digital tools.

5.2. Transfer Value Determination/Alignment

Successes

- **Role and Methodology:** Leading role of National Societies in establishing the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) value based on capacity. Used baseline surveys and community assessments involving people affected and local authorities.
- **Transfer value adjustments based on the context and escalation of the situation.**
- **Coordination and Sustainability:** Alignment with government and humanitarian MEB.
- **Use of existing tools within the Movement,** for example, Cash Hub Toolbox to determine MEB.

Challenges

- **Issues Related to Government Policies and Data Protection:** Absence of approved Government MEB in some countries. Quality and availability of government statistics. Taxation uncertainties on humanitarian aid.
- **Difficulties in calculating household incomes,** understanding and covering gaps.
- **Inflation, currency fluctuations,** and exchange rates.
- **Bureaucracy and delays in National Society and/ or government approval** for transfer value changes.
- **Operational Difficulties:** Challenges in calculating transfer value at the initial response phase.
- **Variability in understanding and implementing** MEB among CWG members.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Keeping MEB updated with ongoing advocacy** for better alignment among all stakeholders in country.
- **Monitoring inflation and adjusting** transfer values accordingly.
- **Implementing faster** decision-making processes.
- **Conducting continuous needs assessments** to identify real needs.
- **Ensuring clear communication on transfer** value calculation to communities.
- **Developing pre-crisis MEB** adopted by the Movement and other stakeholders.
- **Having contingency plans** and CEA in CVA strategies from the beginning.
- **Agreeing on transfer** value with other partners and CWGs early in response.

5.3. Deduplication/Coordination with Other Actors

Successes

- **Effective internal deduplication** processes.
- **Significant support with deduplication** to National Societies provided by the IFRC Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia.
- **Successful data sharing agreements** between IFRC and most National Societies.
- **Implementation of data encryption** in Ukraine, including the use of tax IDs.

Challenges

- **High number of organisations operating** in Moldova, Poland, and Romania created time constraints and difficulties in coordination.
- **Only UNHCR and Red Cross** performed deduplication in Poland due to different data collection platforms.
- **Refusals of data sharing** by some organisations.
- **Identity verification issues.**

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Establishing and signing data sharing agreements** and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with organisations present in country of operation.
- **Developing a common platform** or global agreement for data deduplication.
- **Investing in deduplication processes** at the start of operations.

- **Restrictions on exporting data outside** of the country and extra time needed to run deduplication processes.
- **Instances of organisations blocking support**, particularly in Ukraine.
- **Inability to check deduplication** in Moldova due to lack of access to government-provided lists.
- **Lack of a unified platform** for cross-organisation registration checks.
- **Improving coordination and cooperation** between National Societies and government bodies.
- **Considering implementing a single or unified** registration system internally and externally.

5.4. Community Participation in Targeting

Successes

- **Understanding Community Contexts:** Started by understanding what "community" means in different contexts.
- **Trusted Information Sources:** Confirmed trusted sources of information within communities, ensuring selected community leaders are genuinely trusted.
- **Face-to-Face Interaction:** Early face-to-face interactions during needs verification to build trust and gather background information.
- **Informal Initiatives:** Netherlands Red Cross collaborated with informal local groups, like churches and mosques, to reach underserved populations and determine targets.
- **Advisory Committees:** Turkish Red Crescent used advisory committees comprising community leaders, local authorities, and community groups for ongoing engagement.

Challenges

- **Limited Reach:** Only reaching communities that National Society directly worked with, potentially missing others.
- **Early Engagement Inconsistency:** Inconsistent early-stage community engagement in determining vulnerability criteria.
- **Engagement:** Face-to-face engagement is challenging in urban areas, particularly in apartments.
- **Government-Controlled Criteria:** Advocacy and relationship-building needed when governments insist on setting assistance criteria.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Being open with communities** about limitations in capacity and funding to avoid overpromising.
- **Developing strategies for urban contexts** using social media, focus groups, and collaborating with local community organizations and small NGOs.
- **Involving local context experts** in programme design, including engaging local volunteers and staff.
- **Consistently adopting** the advisory committee model to know and build rapport with community contacts.

Sectoral Cash Assistance

6.1. Cash for Health

Successes

- **Designated Staff for Eligibility Verification:** Improved management of funds and reduced inclusion errors.

Challenges

- **Limited Availability of Medical Personnel:** National Societies face challenges with the availability of medical personnel to support Cash for Health programming.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Seeking for resources to have health personnel supporting with** programme planning and implementation.

- **Supporting Documents Implementation:** Introduced supporting documents to improve targeted population eligibility verification.
- **Digital Registration System:** Developed a digitalised system to efficiently register affected people in remote areas.
- **Collaboration with Public Health Institutions:** Partnered with public health institutions to incorporate health incentives into CVA programmes.
- **Technical Capacity Limitations:** Limited technical capacity to implement digital solutions within sectors poses obstacles.
- **Data Concerns:** Persistent concerns regarding data security, particularly concerning health data.
- **Reaching out to other National Societies or IFRC for technical advice** and support in areas of need.
- **Improving digital solutions to effectively reach rural areas** while ensuring data security.

6.2. Cash for Shelter

Successes

- **Providing Affected People with Appropriate Support:** Extended duration of the financial support, contributing to people's self-sufficiency to be able to maintain private accommodation.
- **Inclusion of Host Communities:** Included host communities in assistance programs for displaced people.
- **Donor Flexibility:** CVA programmes benefited from donor flexibility in programme implementation and utilisation of funds.

Challenges

- **Lack of Financial Resources to Implement Cash for Shelter:** Dependence on limited funding sources poses challenges to sustained CVA programmes over longer period.
- **Delays in Transfers:** Delays in payments from FSPs.
- **Data Protection:** Persistent concerns regarding use and protection of personal data.
- **Defining Target Groups:** Challenges in selecting the target group and formulating eligibility criteria.
- **Exit Strategy:** Developing a clear exit strategy for cash for shelter programmes.
- **Inclusion of PGI in Programming:** Diverse shelter assistance programmes require better inclusion of PGI components.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Ensuring proper authorisation and documentation** for GDPR compliance.
- **Contracting several FSPs**, especially in well-funded programmes, to avoid delayed payments.
- **Establishing good relations with all partners, including authorities and NGO** for funding opportunities.
- **Disseminating lessons learned reports** and guidelines to other regions outside of Europe and Central Asia.
- **Ensuring exit strategies are linked to and align with** social protection and livelihoods programs.

6.3. Cash for Protection and Other Sectoral CVA Projects

Successes

- **Successful Implementations:** Montenegro Cash for Education programme worked well with appropriate transfer value and targeting.
- **Broad Sectoral Engagement:** successful examples from Bosnia, Serbia, and Kyrgyzstan included cash for health, food, education, and utilities.

Challenges

- **Monitoring Cash for Protection:** Difficulty in defining and monitoring protection outcomes both short and long-term.
- **Defining appropriate targeting criteria** to meet the needs of marginalised groups.
- **Political and Operational Barriers:** Politicisation of humanitarian aid and challenges in approaching and supporting marginalised groups.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Improving coordination with governments and communication** of targeting criteria with communities.
- **Organising CVA training** for sectoral staff and result-based management training.
- **Implementing CVA in parallel with other activities**, for example employability support, casework, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.

- **Strategy and Expertise:** Existing strategies to expand beyond multi-purpose cash assistance (MPC). Inclusion of sectoral experts (e.g., livelihoods, health) in programme design. Involving people in vulnerable situations in programme design for quality programming.
- **Pilot Programme Limitations:** Limited involvement in pilot programmes (only two branches implementing CVA programme in Montenegro).
- **Insufficient funding for sectorial cash** (e.g., Latvia's education vouchers).
- **Sectoral and Expertise Gaps:** Programmes not purely sectoral (e.g., MPC for health) and it was hard to monitor if cash was spent for specific needs.
- **Engaging with technical experts for programme definition and objectives** as well as eligibility criteria.
- **Involving CEA before programme launch**, raise awareness, and gather feedback.

6.4. Optimising Beneficiary Data Management for Sectoral Cash Assistance

Successes

- **Usage of RedRose, EspoCRM, and Kobo** for data management.
- **Implementation of EspoCRM** as a case management system.

Challenges

- **Dependency on the 510 Team and/ or IFRC** for Information Management (IM) systems.
- **Shortage of dedicated National Society IM staff** leading to piled-up tasks.
- **Presence of different IM systems and tools used** within the National Society and IFRC.
- **Small-scale operations or National Societies not provided with support** from IFRC IM and the 510 Team.
- **Persistent concerns regarding personal data.**

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Assigning responsibilities** for one or several staff specifically for IM-related tasks.
- **Ensuring that roles related** to IM systems are managed within National Society.
- **Making IM a priority** within the Movement.
- **Provide IM tools accessible** for National Societies, possibly hosted or financed by IFRC.
- **Including IM and digital** tools-related costs in budget proposals.
- **Establishing Movement-wide standards** for data protection to accommodate digitalisation needs.
- **Adhering to general data protection** rules, with Movement-wide guidelines.

Cash Preparedness

7.1. CVA Advocacy

Successes

- **Government Collaboration:** In some countries the local government filled gaps to support communities, and the National Society was ready to complement government programs when funded.
- **IFRC Advocacy Support:** IFRC advocacy teams supported negotiation processes with local governments.

Challenges

- **Emergency Pressure:** Implementing CVAP during emergencies puts a lot of pressure on National Societies and branches, requiring a "learning by doing" approach as a preparedness action.
- **Long-Term Process:** Advocacy and implementation are long-term processes, with initial motivation potentially decreasing over time.
- **FSP Fees:** High fees led to resistance from the National Societies.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Include experienced National Societies in advocacy** visits to National Societies wanting to launch CVA programmes.
- **Using lessons learned from disasters where National Societies** could not respond appropriately without a cash programme to emphasise the need for CVA.
- **Advocating directly to** governments to address challenges such as taxation, benefits, and fees.

- **Multi-Level Advocacy:** Advocacy was conducted at various levels, leveraging the National Society's auxiliary role to the government and its historically good reputation.
- **Leadership Engagement:** Targeted senior leadership management, using peer-to-peer approaches among Secretary Generals (SGs) to advance advocacy.
- **Effective Tools:** Utilised tools like the cash toolkit to show management how CVA opens opportunities to donors, with some donors linking funds to CVA.
- **Contingency Planning:** Linked cash with contingency planning with other stakeholders.
- **Preference for Material Aid:** In certain crises, communities preferred in-kind distributions over cash assistance.
- **Misuse Assumptions:** Assumptions about the misuse of CVA support posed challenges in advocating for CVA.
- **Lack of International Support:** Insufficient international support in advocacy processes.
- **Advocating for CVAP** to donors using data backed-up evidence, previous achievements, and case studies.
- **Employing peer-to-peer and regional** approaches for advocacy, citing examples like CVA implementation experiences in Central Asia.
- **Allocating funding to CVAP** to support and enhance advocacy efforts.
- **Emphasise the importance** of localisation and anticipatory action as drivers for advocacy.
- **Leverage the National Society's auxiliary role** to the government and link CVAP with social protection initiatives.
- **Link CVAP with the CVA Community of Practice** to enhance its role in advocacy.
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7.2. Designation of CVA Focal Points

Successes	Challenges	Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designation of Focal Points (FP) has increased National Society awareness of CVA and promoted cooperation with stakeholders. • Structured Process: CVA processes became more structured with the involvement of FPs. • Experience Sharing: Promoted sharing of experiences between countries. • Capacity Building: Investment in training for FPs has been crucial in strengthening National Societies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing Issues: Insufficient human resources to have designated CVA FP. • Role Misunderstanding: Misunderstandings about the roles and responsibilities of CVA FPs among team members. • Multiple Responsibilities: FPs often have multiple roles beyond CVA, affecting their focus and effectiveness. • Advocacy and Knowledge: Need for internal advocacy and understanding of the CVA processes. • Lack of IM Capacity: Insufficient Information Management capabilities within National Societies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate internally for CVA roles to be separate and fully dedicated to CVA related tasks. Ensure National Society leadership introduces FPs to branches and supports internal communication. • Clearly explain FP roles and responsibilities to the entire National Society team. Define the CVA FP role in the organizational structure with clear Terms of Reference (TOR). • Designate FPs at the branch level if National Society capacity allows for that. • Secure funding to cover National Societies' CVA-related expenses.

7.3. CVA Preparedness Self-Assessment Process

Successes	Challenges	Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions
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- **Previous Program Success:** For National Societies having previous experience in CVA provided a strong foundation for new programmes.
- **Field Staff Inclusion:** Involving field staff in the CVA self-assessment process was beneficial.
- **Leadership Engagement in Self-Assessment:** Leadership was open to CVA, and a two-day self-assessment workshop with SG and HQ participation proved effective.
- **Plan of Action (PoA):** PoA can be a useful tool to facilitate new initiatives and funding opportunities for CVA.
- **Conduct self-assessments physically with all relevant stakeholders,** including branches from the beginning.
- **Securing the resources, capacity, and time to implement** the PoA can be challenging.
- **Long-term Support:** Lack of sustained support and dedication to CVA programming is an issue.
- **Restricted Access to Tools Available:** Not all National Societies have access to all IFRC tools (e.g., in COP SharePoint).
- **Prior to self-assessment, ensure all stakeholders and branches are familiar** with CVA and existing or potential CVA programs in the country.
- **Conduct self-assessments physically with all relevant stakeholders,** including branches from the beginning.
- **Emphasise the importance of being realistic during self-assessment** to ensure effective IFRC and Partner National Society support.
- **Appoint a dedicated National Society staff** for CVA(P).

7.4. Trainings

Successes

- **Capacity Building Plan:** Implementing a comprehensive capacity building plan, providing CVA trainings equally to all branches within the National Society.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Shared practical cases, both successful and unsuccessful, during trainings to enhance learning.
- **Training of Branches Staff:** Specifically trained branches and teams directly involved in CVA activities, strengthens the National Societies' capacity to deliver cash.
- **Cash School Approach:** National Societies created a Cash School approach that served as a good entry point to understand CVA.

Challenges

- **Ensuring updated training information, contacts, and tools are accessible** can be challenging.
- **Training Structure Complexity:** Some training structures may be overly complex for participants with no prior CVA experience.
- **Repetitive Training Attendance:** The same individuals attending the same training repeatedly may limit the number of trained personnel.
- **Advocacy for Practical Application:** Not all National Society branches are interested in applying the knowledge gained from CVA trainings practically.
- **Capacity and Finance Constraints:** Capacity and financial restrictions within National Societies can hinder further capacity building within the National Society.

Mitigation Measures and Recommended Actions

- **Update the content of CVA Level 2 training,** adding more practical aspects to the training.
- **Systematise opportunities for** practical experience and peer-to-peer learning.
- **Standardise CVA IM trainings and provide** sectoral training on CVA.
- **Involve more relevant personnel** in trainings, including from branches, to enhance National Society capacity in CVA. (this activity depends on NSs HR mapping of training needs)
- **Ensure participants have a good understanding of** specific CVA terminology and abbreviations prior to training. Conduct preliminary online training before physical sessions to familiarise participants with basic CVA concepts.

Next Steps

With the dissemination of this report to all National Societies in the Europe and Central Asia region, then the relevant findings for each of the key CVA themes can be reviewed, and the ones that are relevant and actionable for their context can be integrated into their current or future CVA programming.

A similar exercise will take place with IFRC CVA focal points at the country/cluster delegation and the regional level to help inform the development of the Regional CVA Roadmap and to identify and prioritize where technical assistance, new initiatives or investments may be needed. The Regional CVA Community of Practice will also be consulted to identify the recommended actions that they can best promote and support.

For AccessRC, the related findings will be shared with the IFRC Integrated Assistance team in Geneva so that they can be taken into consideration for the development of the next version of the application.

As the response to the crisis evolves, there is now an increased focus on and prioritization of CVA related institutional strengthening to better enable National Societies to design, implement and support scalable, high quality and timely CVA. The findings from this workshop can be further reviewed and acted upon by National Societies as part of their [Roadmap for CVA Preparedness](#) activities.



Presentation by the Ukrainian Red Cross Society. © IFRC

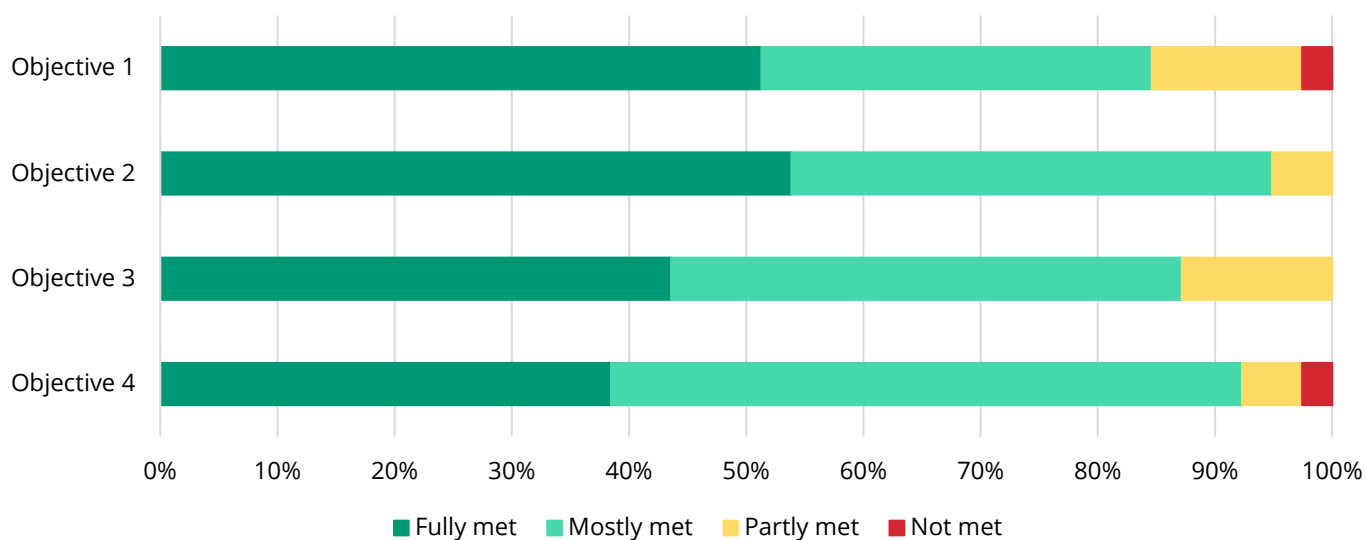
Results of the Final Workshop Evaluation

The final evaluation was conducted during the closing part of the workshop. Participants were provided with a link to an anonymous questionnaire with a predefined set of questions.

CVA Workshop Satisfaction Levels



Did the Workshop Meet Its Objectives?



Main Takeaways from the Workshop Participants

"There is a lot more work to be done on cash preparedness and understanding what sectoral cash is and how to implement it."

"Loads of great experiences and the opportunity to keep on learning. It would be interesting to capture learning from one year to the next to improve our CVA response."

"CVA is an innovative and important tool within Humanitarian response. Much appreciated by recipients."

"I think there is a wealth of experience in the Ukraine Response. This should be documented as much as possible for future learning."

"Collaborate more with neighboring National Societies and regional Cash team."

"It gave me a more holistic view of the whole CVA process."

"CEA and digitals tool enabled cash at scale."

"Conduct the cash preparedness assessment in our NS."

"A lot of examples from other countries, that can be used while advocating for CVA in my country."

"An understanding of the investment of the time, dedication and financial capacities into Cash Preparedness."

"The ability to learn more about the experience of other NS was the most valuable thing to take away."

Annex I – CVA Lessons Learned Workshop Agenda

Summary Agenda

DAY 1

Tuesday, 14 May

Timing	Topic	Facilitators
9-9:20	Welcome from IFRC and American Red Cross	Andreas & Robert
9:20-9:40	Introductions	Fatmanur
9:40-10	Overview of the CVA response for Ukraine and Impacted Countries	Stephen
10-10:15	Overview of the workshop and session methodology	Scott
10:15-10:30	<i>Break 1</i>	
10:30-12:45	Session 1: Digital systems and tools	Servet, Stephen & 510
13-14	<i>Lunch</i>	
14-16:30	Session 2: Agreements with FSPs <i>(includes Break 2)</i>	Jaime & Vedat
16:30-17	Summary and key findings from Day 1 (feedback, reflections)	Migle

DAY 2

Wednesday, 15 May

Timing	Topic	Facilitators
9-11:30	Session 3: Community Engagement and Accountability <i>(includes Break 1)</i>	Fatmanur
11:30-12	Session 4/Part I: Cash and Coordination	Scott, Emma, Marcin & Moosa
12-13	<i>Lunch</i>	
13-14:45	Session 4/Part II: Cash and Coordination	same as above
14:45-15	<i>Break 2</i>	
15-17:30	Session 5: Multipurpose Cash	Stephen, Servet Fatmanur

DAY 3

Thursday, 16 May

Timing	Topic	Facilitators
9-9:30	Summary and key findings from Day 2 (feedback, reflections)	Migle
9:30-12	Session 6: Sectoral Cash <i>(includes Break 1)</i>	Servet
12-1	<i>Lunch</i>	
13-15:30	Session 7: Cash Preparedness <i>(includes Break 2)</i>	Marcin, Emma & Moosa
15:30-16	Summary and key findings from Day 3 (feedback, reflections)	Migle
16-16:15	Workshop final evaluation by participants	Fatmanur
16:15-16:30	Workshop closing and next steps	Scott

Annex II – CVA Lessons Learned Workshop Participant List

1	Romualdas	Kaminskas	Bulgarian RC
2	Milena	Popova	Bulgarian RC
3	Liis	Tipp	Estonian RC
4	Nano	Gvasalia	Georgia RC
5	Sophia	Peponi	Hellenic RC
6	Barnabas	Szendeff	Hungarian RC
7	Valerija	Krupicka	Hungarian RC
8	Lauma	Strode	Latvian RC
9	Gabriele	Jasunskiene	Lithuanian RC
10	Aleksandra	Valkanovska	RC of North Macedonia
11	Vasilka	Siderovska	RC of North Macedonia
12	Radu	Dutcovici	RC of Republic of Moldova
13	Kristina	Burzanovic	RC of Montenegro
14	Jacek	Kulikowski	Polish RC
15	Razvan	Cateriniuc	Romanian RC
16	Olena	Shevchenko	Romanian RC
17	Anton	Vybronov	Russian RC
18	Gabriela	Šujanská	Slovak RC
19	Serhat	Saylan	Turkish RC
20	Nur Duygu	Keten Sav	Turkish RC
21	Olena	Skrypnikova	Ukraine RC
22	Mariia	Vaskevych	Ukraine RC
23	Marga	Ledo	CashCap/Ukraine RC
24	Wolfgang	Klug	Austrian RC
25	Stefan	Pankl	Austrian RC
26	Ana	De Castro	British RC
27	Jon	Pewter	British RC
28	Riikka	Kaukonen Lindholm	Finnish RC
29	Fredrick	Orimba	German RC
30	Fernando Suarez	Jimenez	Netherlands RC
31	Lola	Verkuil	Netherlands RC
32	Gianluca	Rigolio	Swiss RC
33	Rob	Kaufman	American RC
34	Adriana	Estrada	Spanish RC
35	Angelina	Savchuk	Netherlands RC
36	Olga	Davydova	Netherlands RC
37	Xhilda	Nushi	Albanian RC
38	Azra	Bricic	RC of Bosnia and Herzegovina

39	Erkin	Sarymsakov	RC of Kyrgyzstan
40	Beikut	Rysbek uulu	RC of Kyrgyzstan
41	Igor	Radmanović	RC of Serbia
42	Fitrati	Shamsudin	RC of Tajikistan
43	Olessya	Zhuravleva	IFRC Central Asia Office
44	Alena	Saponenka	IFRC Russia Cluster
45	Lars	Fordal	IFRC CCD Moscow
46	Farook	Rahman	IFRC CSEE Cluster
47	Jomari	Borlongan	IFRC Poland Cluster
48	Hleb	Salaouyou	IFRC Poland Cluster
49	Valentina	Havroschi	IFRC - Moldova
50	Vesal	Kuchumov	IFRC Regional Office
51	Katja	Kotkavaara	IFRC Regional Office
52	Moosa	Shifaz	IFRC Geneva
53	Loyse	Tabin	ICRC Geneva
54	Ian	O'Donnell	IFRC Geneva
55	Helen	Welch	American RC
56	Jean	Lin	Hong Kong RC
57	Nagham	Sayegh	IFRC MENA
58	Joseph	Oliveros	IFRC Geneva
FACILITATION TEAM			
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2	Marcin	Podlesny	IFRC RO - Europe
3	Scott	DiPretoro	IFRC RO - Europe
4	Emma	Delo	British RC/CashHub
5	Servet	Avci	IFRC RO - Europe
6	Stephen	Hagerich	IFRC Geneva
7	Migle	Promoskalyte	IFRC RO - Europe
8	Vedat Aslan	Aslan	IFRC RO - Europe
9	Jaime	Pineda	IFRC RO - Europe