

Disaster Crisis
Preparedness
Response
Recovery

Asia Pacific Regional Approach Livelihoods & Cash Transfer Programming



Photo 1: Myanmar Red Cross, Relief & Recovery response operations, Dec 2015

Introduction

In the Asia Pacific Region the IFRC is enhancing the capacity of the member National Societies to implement cash transfers at scale in relief and integrate livelihoods into preparedness, response and recovery. Efforts will continue in 2016 to ensure the relevance of member National Societies to effectively contribute to saving lives, improve self-reliance at household level and positively impact on building more disaster resilient communities.

Taking global and regional learning, newly developed tools and by building strategic alliances, the IFRC aims to further strengthen the livelihood approaches of member National Societies' across the Asia Pacific. Having a readiness to focus on earlier on rebuilding livelihoods will limit the negative impacts of risky coping strategies, kick-start early recovery and contribute to the overall community resilience to natural disasters and other shocks; and by doing so the IFRC will promote approaches that focus on gender equality and opportunities for women in the community.

Cash transfer based programming (CTP) is an effective and flexible mechanism to save lives, protect livelihoods and strengthen recovery from disasters that not only improves choice and dignity for disaster-affected communities, but also can be quicker, greener and more cost-effective than in-kind based assistance. It can stimulate local livelihoods, economies and markets and ensure that harm is not done to the local economy through our humanitarian response.

CTP fundamentally increases the accountability of our humanitarian assistance through higher quality targeting, beneficiary verification and the critical importance of community feedback and accountability mechanisms and beneficiary communications.

The IFRC remains a global leader in the use of cash transfers (CTP) to address community needs following a crisis. The member National Societies of the IFRC in the Asia Pacific have a healthy history of using CTP in disaster response. The Indian Ocean tsunami response was a turning point and CTP has been used in most major emergencies in the region as seen in the response to the Pakistan earthquake (2006), Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh (2007), Pakistan floods (2010); Philippines typhoons (2013) and most recently in Nepal earthquake and winter support (2015).

The IFRC will continue to seek appropriate approaches to delivering relief assistance, diversifying its response options by mainstreaming livelihoods and cash into its relief and recovery programmes so that disaster affected communities are able to meet their diverse needs in the most appropriate, timely and dignified way through in-kind and/or cash transfer programming delivered by National Societies and IFRC disaster response capacities.

Technical support will be provided on a continuous basis by DCPRR team and through 'one team' peer-support from strategically placed National Societies. The experience captured at country level will inform new and ongoing approaches in disaster risk management and preparedness.

The IFRC is uniquely placed as a leader in CTP in emergencies and to effectively influence the regional livelihoods agenda due to the regional reach, national penetration and potential to scale up its implementation capacity particularly in the immediate response to a crisis.

The following are priority areas for the DCPRR livelihoods and cash work during 2016:

- Food security (food assistance & production)
- Vocational skills training
- Livelihoods protection
- Livelihoods restoration and diversification.



Photo 2: Vietnam Red Cross, Participants of the Economic and Social Inclusion for people with disabilities program.

Strategic approach for the IFRC

The IFRC 'Strategy 2020' places specific emphasises on protecting livelihoods, enabling safe living and promoting social inclusion. Integrating livelihoods into the programme design aims to move beyond basic relief assistance and supports men and women to return to normal by enabling them to recover productive assets, enhance skills and integrate into the local economy.

To tackle the strategic priority areas the DCPRR have six operational focuses contributing to two overall goals:

- 1) That by the end of 2020, Asia Pacific member National Societies will have developed their preparedness capacities for scalable and rapid cash-based programming to meet immediate relief and recovery needs.
- 2) Member National Societies will have the capacity, confidence and resources to appropriately assess, design and implement livelihood interventions during relief, early recovery and longer term.



Figure 1: Operational focuses for the livelihood & CTP approach

The initiatives planned for 2016-2020 will build on this extensive experience gained by the IFRC in the region, taking learning from 'cash and livelihood preparedness and response' integrating into advocacy, guidance and approaches for preparedness, relief and recovery.

Operational focus: Livelihoods & CTP

1. Investment in preparedness for Livelihoods & CTP is critical to achieve timely and scalable programmes.

IFRC recognises that training alone is not sufficient to ensure adequate institutionalisation of livelihoods and CTP capacity within operational readiness. Investment in institutional disaster management preparedness will aim to strengthen the following elements for livelihoods and CTP.

1. Enabling systems
2. Tools and guidance
3. Resources and capacity
4. Coordination and communication

The IFRC has developed the Cash and finance SOPs that clarifies roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the cash transfer process and cash preparedness diagnostic tool. These will be promoted at all levels of the organisation and integrated into the DRCE process at country level.



Photo 1: IFRC President Nepal Earthquake Response bank cheques pilot intervention, Kathmandu, 2015

The IFRC has developed guidance and tools for livelihood assessments, market analysis, cash feasibility and managing risk. These tools will be adapted to local contexts and utilised to enhance the existing country profiles for a more appropriate evidence based analysis and disaster response.

2. Having an dynamic response and surge capacity is critical for ensuring appropriate speed and scale of interventions

The 'Principles and Rules' are the basis for committing to standards and expectations for delivery of humanitarian assistance. Using them to raise awareness of integrated programming, livelihoods integration and CTP in relief is an effective means to communicate the IFRC priorities.

The global surge mechanisms need to reflect the needs of member National Societies and an effectiveness of response. IFRC will work with Asia Pacific National Societies and PNSs to maximise the use of resources such RDRT and HES¹ for livelihoods and CTP. Furthermore training curriculums will be revised to integrate livelihoods awareness and CTP into the skills of the RDRT and NDRT as effective response tools.

3. Maintaining a critical mass of highly skilled humanitarian and development practitioners with capacities in livelihoods and cash is essential.

The livelihood sector and CTP provide many opportunities for specialised capacity development. The IFRC will develop a regional livelihood lab/hub to consolidate knowledge and increase capacity to offer relevant solutions to humanitarian problems presented by the member National Societies. National Societies will then be able to position themselves as a partner of choice and leverage global partnerships to maximise impact with quality in an efficient way.

IFRC will ensure that not only Disaster Management and Emergency Response teams are included in capacity development; but open opportunities for others to participate in the IFRC Practical Emergency Cash Training (PECT), IFRC Livelihood Resource Centre (LRC) specialised livelihood training and peer-to-peer exchanges.

The IFRC will secure expert technical support at critical times in the programme cycle, working with Partner National Societies and giving adequate in country support, and increasing opportunities to learn from experienced practitioners. The IFRC will maintain a register of skilled staff, document and share learning and good practices derived from the implementation of livelihoods preparedness and response activities.

¹ Household Economic Security experts – deployed by the British Red Cross

4. Effectively integrating market approaches in recovery builds more resilient communities.

Understanding markets, supporting small business initiatives and building the capacity for business continuity will reduce the financial and social impact of disasters on communities, accelerate recovery, forge resilient supply chains and promote stronger linkages to government support and social protection mechanisms.

The IFRC will support member National Societies to undertake analysis of the critical market systems and household economy. Understanding market capacity, income, vulnerability and household coping to better inform disaster risk reduction, preparedness plans and early response decisions.

5. Explore innovative uses of technology to improve the speed and effectiveness of the responses.

The IFRC will seek approaches that integrate affordable innovations into preparedness relief and recovery. The IFRC will test regional cash transfer payment options for member National Societies and is committed to promoting RAMP for registration and monitoring. Various options to be piloted include remittance, mobile transfers and electronic cards before being brought to scale.

The IFRC will facilitate access to technical support and work with partners to pilot programmes that give the means to practically apply newly acquired skills, guidance and operational procedures. This also includes positioning the member National Societies to be the service provider for cash in envelopes (CiE), making them strategic partner of choice and increasing financial sustainability.

6. Enhance coordination and partnership to leverage the comparative advantages of the IFRC and member National Societies.

IFRC believes that external partnerships are essential to share and maximise and leverage livelihoods resources, technical support and trainings.

The IFRC Asia Pacific regional office has built strong links with the LRC and with the Cash and Livelihood Coordinator based in Bangkok the IFRC is now in a position to leverage support from strategic and operational partners to specific programmes and interventions as identified by the National Societies. This will be accompanied with a systematic approach to learning and capacity development through networking, peer to peer support and mentoring.

This coordination will also extend to the wider humanitarian community and will focus on working closely with ILO, WFP, UNHCR, OCHA, ECHO and CALP to ensure that the IFRC remains recognised as a leader in response preparedness and relief.

The IFRC is building ties with financial service providers including MasterCard, Visa and Western Union to develop electronic solutions to delivery cash at scale, whilst reducing potential risks associated with hard cash. In addition strategic Partner National Societies that are positioning themselves to provide leadership in cash transfer programming and livelihoods.



Photo 4: NRCS youth volunteers carrying out the exit survey on mobile phones with the elderly beneficiaries.

Representing a common approach

To achieve a sustainable impact the IFRC will explore new partnerships with other relevant actors and integrate different approaches with existing expertise to expand operational services and form a common approach to make communities more resilient.

It is important for the IFRC Asia Pacific that there is a common understanding of the real contributions and impacts being made at the community level. This will ensure IFRC to manage more strategic messaging of the work of member National Societies, and contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Action, and existing RCRC resolutions, such as the Beijing call for innovation and principles and rules for humanitarian assistance.



Figure 2: Framework for Comprehensive livelihood delivery

The framework represents the work member National Societies are doing at community and national level, whether it is incentive laws for livelihoods, waste management and climate-based livelihood adaptation, microcredit and savings, nutrition, social safety net enhancement or cooperative development. The combinations of these actions address the different components of the framework and are the key contributors for resilience building. These and other actions can be done by the Red Cross Red Crescent, whilst others can be implemented by key partners the National Societies work. Using this framework, the opportunity we can have ahead is to work together better for a common purpose.

Table 1: Regionally aggregated country-level results taken from AP region Operational Plan

Outcome and Outputs	Indicator for success
Outcome: Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods.	<i>70% of surveyed households that have received assistance report that their livelihoods have improved</i>
Output 1: Vocational skills training to increase income sources is provided to target population.	<i>30,000 people trained in vocational skills trainings to increase income sources</i>
Output 2: Food assistance is provided to the most affected populations.	<i>500,000 people reached with food assistance in accordance with SPHERE standards</i>
Output 3: Livelihoods are restored and diversified.	<i>70% of total households supported report an increase of income</i>
Output 4: Livelihoods are protected and negative coping strategies reduced among target populations.	<i>a. 70% of total communities reached are implementing livelihoods protection strategies based on community plans b. 80% of livelihoods initiatives have a targeted approach for elderly persons in community</i>

Table 2: The Livelihoods and Cash Regional Achievements

Area of focus	Achievements
Livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livelihoods being recognised as integral into disaster response, early recovery and community based resilience and operational plans and tools adjusted to reflect this recognition. • Livelihoods awareness sessions conducted with operational staff chapter, national and regional level promoting the regional examples and the role of the Livelihood Resource Centre in supporting livelihood interventions. • Increased coherence and stronger relationships between countries, region, IFRC Geneva and the IFRC Livelihood Resource Centre.
Cash Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFRC able to meet 60,000 households immediate needs with CTP within 3 months in Philippines Haiyan operation largely thanks to preparedness work. This is a first for IFRC and for the humanitarian sector. This success has been replicated with the provision of unconditional CTP to 40,000 HH within 4 months of the Nepal EQ, 2015, plus over 50,000 HH for the seasonal winter support. • Increase in number of National Societies requesting as part of DREF and Appeals a cash component: including Bangladesh, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Philippines. • Increase number of PNSs committing bilateral support to National Societies for cash preparedness • Overall awareness and acceptability of cash-based interventions improved with CTP integrated into the RDRT induction course & NDRT training in Bangladesh and a CTP feasibility study carried out in the Pacific region. • Readiness and capacity of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Myanmar, Pakistan and Vietnam National Societies to respond to humanitarian needs with cash based interventions improved, through the development/refining of cash SOPs, guidelines, service agreements, lessons learnt, targeting training and peer-exchanges. • Hosting of high-level training on cash in emergencies (PECT), leading to the creation of a regional register of over 20 cash trained experts with adequate capacity to be deployed to support the implementation of cash based interventions in emergency. • The IFRC regarded externally as the regional leader in the use of cash in emergencies in the Asia Pacific region.