SHARED SERVICES HUB

A Case Study on Collaboration Outcomes in Ukraine

Prepared by Anna Kuligowska, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Manager | Collaborative Cash Delivery Network. Hosted by Save the Children UK.

COLLABORATIVE CASH DELIVERY (CCD) IS A NETWORK OF 14
OF THE LARGEST INTERNATIONAL NGOS WHO COLLECTIVELY
DELIVER OVER $1BN IN LAST MILE CASH AND VOUCHER
ASSISTANCE EVERY YEAR.

www.collaborativecash.org

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

The Collaborative Cash Delivery (CCD) Network launched the Shared Services Hub (SSH) as a new approach to support CCD members in responding to the escalating conflict in Ukraine. The Hub was led by the Collaboration Facilitator who was appointed in June 2022.

The Hub has helped CCD global members, and many other NGOs who formed part of CCD's communities of practice (CoP) in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, to build technical capacities, share knowledge, and develop common strategies and advocacy messages in the areas of

- **cash assistance,**
- **social protection,**
- **localisation,**
- **digital literacy and interoperability**

The Hub was later expanded by including the Manager of the Local NGO Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) CoP.

The SSH's CCD Community of Practice

- Collaboration Facilitator
- Localisation Adviser
- LNGO CoP Coordinator
- Social Protection Adviser
- Cash Trainer of Trainers
- Digital Literacy and Interoperability Adviser

It was envisaged that this package of support to CCD members and the humanitarian CVA response would result in common challenges being addressed, leading to more effective, efficient and accountable programming, and strengthen the regional humanitarian response to the crisis.
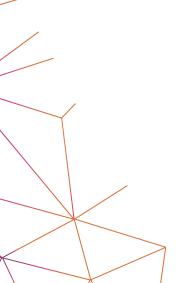
Challenges in Humanitarian Crises

Responders to humanitarian crises worldwide face common obstacles. Despite the existence of the cluster system and cash working groups, meaningful programmatic coordination, especially between sectors, and holistic strategies to meet the needs of people affected by crises, can be limited. The donor community is also facing pressures in allocating funding, which is insufficient to respond to the scale and needs generated by the crises. Additionally, rigidities in existing humanitarian systems exacerbate these challenges.

A key issue in humanitarian responses is the difficulty in operationalising humanitarian agendas. Guidance and tools are inconsistently applied, and discussion fora are often not conducive to meaningful debate and discussion.

In Ukraine, where the SSH was first implemented, these challenges were also evident. The initial CCD scoping mission to Ukraine in June 2022 collected strong feedback from international and local NGOs that:

- INGOs felt underrepresented in the Cash Working Group (CWG),
- LNGOs were significantly underrepresented in all coordination forums and funding opportunities,
- NGOs disagreed with some technical and operational decisions related to the CVA response,
- social protection system understanding, and opportunities for linkages of CVA were lacking,
- the lack of SOPs for deduplication impacted agencies' ability to have harmonised approaches,
- deduplication discussions focused on MPCA only,
- complementarity of sectoral cash and MPCA was missing from conversations,
- the response was fragmented with a lack of overall strategy, and
- they wanted a space to discuss, strategize and advocate and to raise the NGO voice collectively.

SSH OFFER

The SSH was a unique, innovative and impactful initiative able to shape and influence the humanitarian response in Ukraine by tackling commonly identified challenges present in crisis settings.

SSH was distinct in its ability to steer the humanitarian response from an apolitical, independent, and multi-agency standpoint. It operated solely based on humanitarian principles, without serving any political agenda. The Hub was collaborative, agile, inclusive, funding-agnostic, and working outside established humanitarian systems, though adding value to these. It addressed the gaps in resources and coordination that hinder rapid operational responses to crises.

In Ukraine, while many actors mobilised short-term consultants, the SSH remained the only entity capable of providing **continuous** and **adaptable support** to the evolving situation. Currently, no other apolitical resource like the SSH exists in Ukraine.

Moreover, the SSH was uniquely positioned to hold actors present in the response accountable, and challenge the humanitarian system in ways others cannot. Although this was sometimes met with resistance and exclusion, SSH members continued to engage, negotiate, broker, and address the gaps present in the response progressively building the Hub's credibility and influence. The SSH has now built very strong relationships with the CWG, clusters and the PeReHID Initiative.[1]

Although the SSH primarily liaised with humanitarian responders, **crisis-affected populations remained central to its strategy and decisions.** The Hub's main motivation was to ensure that humanitarian CVA assistance was of the highest quality and reached those in need, based on their vulnerability.

Ukraine Regional Response

Initially, the SSH was excluded from coordination fora in Ukraine and lacked the authority to influence the response. However, through the persistence of its members, who continually engaged with responders and developed a package of practical, usable, and **publicly available products**, the Hub became a respected entity with institutional knowledge and connections providing local and international NGOs with information, advice on cash programming, and support.

Furthermore, the Hub collaborated with Ground Truth Solutions (GTS)- an INGO exploring the experiences of cash applicants and recipients using a user journey[2] approach. The Hub members connected GTS to key actors in the Ukraine response, ensured the research findings and recommendations were relevant and supported the dissemination of the research reports across key coordination fora. GTS' reports[3] were met with great interest. The collaboration between GTS and the SSH, and the combination of expertise, experience and connections, amplified the impact of both entities' work.

---

1 **PeReHID Initiative | socialprotection.org**
2 GTS defines this approach as a "creative problem-solving tool inspired by human-centred design. They visualise individuals' relationships with, and use of a product or service in order to develop what users would see as improvements." Taken from: GTS, **'Cash is king- if you can get it. Mapping the user journeys of cash recipients in Ukraine'**, 2023.
3 **Mapping the user journeys of cash recipients in Ukraine — Ground Truth Solutions**

Over time, the SSH has become an advisory body, significantly influencing the direction of the response. Its involvement has also raised the profile and influence of the CCD Network and the NGO community overall

The following examples demonstrate the Hub's broad impact across different areas of the response.

LOCALISATION

Local responders in Ukraine face challenges participating in the humanitarian system governing the response. This is due to the unfamiliarity with the humanitarian and cluster system, overwhelming responsibilities, and institutional and technical capacity gaps. This leads to the disempowerment of local actors, whose voices are not adequately represented in response coordination forums and who do not feel confident to participate when included in such spaces. This also means that the expertise of local organisations is not fully utilised.

SSH has played a pivotal role in **elevating the status of local organisations** by building their confidence, emboldening them to be vocal about their expertise, needs and aspirations. It also fostered connections among them in the absence of a locally led forum.

Through the establishment of a local Civil Society Organisations (CSO) **Community of Practice** (CoP), SSH created an inclusive, vibrant, and safe **space for LNGOs,** facilitated in Ukrainian to enhance their cash technical capacity, knowledge exchange and capacity strengthening.

Since its launch in late April 2024, 50 local organisations have joined the CoP, participating in workshops, discussing topics important to them and collectively advocating for change.

> "Participants emphasised the value of the workshop in enhancing their understanding of cash programming and social protection and called for these workshops to continue long-term."   - Workshop Report, August 2024

In June 2024, the CoP developed an advocacy paper on taxation in Ukraine, which was presented to the CWG. This led to the establishment of a Legal Task Force within the group to continue discussions on taxation, with CoP members encouraged to join.

> "CCD is the initiative we want to support the most as we see actual fruits of our collaboration and practical ways forward."   - CCD member LNGO

In line with its localisation objectives, the Hub has also contributed towards strengthening LNGOs' technical capacity in cash programming. The CCD Global Cash Trainer of Trainers (ToT) developed a suite of cash capacity strengthening materials and supported the Local CSO CoP trainers in delivery of training to the CoP members. This is bringing the local actors closer to assuming greater responsibility over the cash cycle.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Similarly to many other humanitarian crises, there was a lack of understanding of the existing social protection (SP) programming in the humanitarian response in Ukraine and an absence of dedicated technical experts who could support this area. Furthermore, an operational guidance for SP in short-term programming was missing.

The SSH has made remarkable progress in embedding SP into cash programming in Ukraine. Below are a few examples of what a dedicated technical role can achieve in this area.

By proactively identifying SP gaps in social protection within the evolving response, the SSH's SP Adviser developed practical **tools** and **guidance**,[4] and organised **training** and **workshops** to address these. This has significantly contributed towards NGOs' ability to incorporate SP into their programming, and fed into PeReHID's technical guidance to humanitarian and development stakeholders, as well as the Ministry of Social Policy, through an established MoU for collaboration between CCD and PeReHID for shared technical capacity.

- The **Social Protection Calculator** is one of such outputs and the first tool of its **kind**, designed to support cash practitioners in incorporating SP benefits and determining the most vulnerable population groups. The calculator has been piloted by several organisations as a referral tool, means of verifying income and to support nuancing of targeting for MPCA. As a result of the pilot, which has now come under the PeReHID Initiative and will continue until early 2025, agencies have been able to better understand barriers to accessing SP systems and have been able to make programmatic tweaks. For example, one organisation realised they were excluding a vulnerable group from their eligibility criteria and adjusted their cash programming to be more inclusive. The SP Calculator can also be used as capacity building for social workers in line with decentralisation efforts.

- Furthermore, to address the lack of SP operational guidance for short-term programming, a blueprint was developed to provide practical guidance on embedding SP into cash programmes and inspire the NGO CVA community to get involved in the humanitarian-SP linkages discourse. The blueprint can be used in different contexts.

> "The level of effort put into the social protection work was stunning. It truly did identify and close the gap that was showing between capacities of members of the sub-WG [of the CWG]." - CCD member INGO

- SSH SP Adviser also identified errors in the Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI) cluster's **winterisation guidelines** which **have been addressed.** Further feedback on the cluster's assumptions regarding coverage of government SP systems has been well received.

---

4 For Social Protection tools and guidance please visit: **CCD SP Products | Collaborative Cash D** and **Collective Initiatives Publications | Collaborative Cash D**

> "The CCD is imperative to provide a counterbalance to the CWG and gives NGOs a unique opportunity to influence on issues such as social protection."
> - INGO CCD member

As a results of these efforts, the actors in the Ukraine Response incorporated a social protection lens into cash programming to the extent which hasn't been considered before.

> "CCD found its way on social protection and were extremely relevant in the added value they could bring by complementing the work of PeReHID Initiative itself and coordinating with different stakeholders." - donor

- Building on the success of Ukraine, the SP Adviser supported SP work in other contexts. In July 2024, a training in the development of the SP calculator was delivered in the Caribbean to Catholic Relief Services' local partners to enable them to analyse SP gaps and opportunities for incorporating SP into humanitarian programming, and build their own SP calculators.

CASH ACTORS' COLLABORATION

The cash response in Ukraine has faced common challenges around coordination and collaboration of cash actors both for MPCA and between sectors, duplication of assistance and competing agendas.

The SSH has played a crucial role in bringing cash actors together to discuss tackling the most urgent and prevalent issues facing the response.

- Together with the CWG, the Collaboration Facilitator developed a **CVA induction/ reference document** for the humanitarian cash response in Ukraine. The document collates key information across sectors required by cash practitioners in Ukraine for ease of reference and is publicly available on **Relief Web.**

- The SSH has also been instrumental in **adjusting** the **Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) transfer value** in Ukraine. Hub members advocated for data sharing among agencies involved in the response, encouraging them to share it with the CWG, and this resulted in several datasets being shared. As a result, the transfer value was revised, directly impacting on the affected populations' ability to meet their basic needs using cash. In November 2024, the CCD and local NGO CoP joined forces with the NGO Platform in Ukraine to try to address the fragmentation of the cash response and the growing proliferation of cash for food. Whilst these advocacy efforts were not successful, they shone a light on the issue which will now come under greater scrutiny as the response progresses.

> *"The CCD has been active in the CWG itself, being the catalyst for decision making and progress on important issues of programme quality, such as the minimum expenditure basket, revising transfer values."* - CCD member INGO

- Furthermore, the Collaboration Facilitator spearheaded **research** in the area of Cash for Protection (C4P). Together with the Regional **Cash for Protection** Task Force (C4PTF), a learning report was commissioned to gather and analyse C4P programmatic experience and lessons learned in the Ukraine response to support the work of agencies engaging in C4P as operational information regarding this kind of programming was absent at the time of writing. The Collaboration Facilitator conducted primary data collection for this project and contributed to the report which helped NGOs see examples of practical programming and supported them with their own programmatic design. It also brought to light that C4P was being used to address health needs; this in part led to further discussions between the protection and health clusters on how to delineate the two.

> *"CCD is very much needed to provide a counterbalance to the UN and to provide technical inputs to the CWG."* - CCD member INGO

DATA LITERACY AND INTEROPERABILITY

Technical advisory support on data governance and digitization offered by the Hub responded to the issues of deduplication and referrals. These challenges were tackled through the introduction of two workstreams: Data Literacy and Data Governance which also aimed to empower the conflict affected populations in Ukraine to take control over their personal data shared with aid providers.

- The **Data Literacy** workstream increased the **awareness of data rights** and encouraged the affected populations to ask questions and demand access to their data as well make informed choices about it.[5]

- The **Data Governance** workstream allowed for developing a **first in the humanitarian sector platform** enabling people affected by the crisis to access information about their cash assistance referrals. This system was operationalised within a consortium that enabled referrals to be made between NGOs, across programmatic sectors. This system aligned with international data protection standards, which provide individuals the right to access and control their personal information.

More importantly, the two workstreams sought to transform the humanitarian sector's approach to personal data handling. Instead of treating personal data as private organisational property, they aimed to reframe it as a shared resource co-managed with the affected populations.

For more details about the workstreams and how they advanced shifting power to the crisis affected individuals, please refer to the **case study** on CCD's website.

---

5 A community survey to explore this is being undertaken in Q4 2024. The results are expected in Q1 2025 and will be published on CCD's website.

NEXT STEPS

The SSH continuously monitored the humanitarian response in Ukraine, positioning itself to further influence the broader humanitarian community. By

- promoting the optimal use of available forums,
- incorporating findings from the GTS cash user journey research,
- fostering connections with sectoral cash initiatives, and
- ensuring that assistance is targeted to the most vulnerable populations,

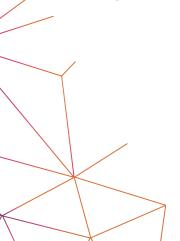the SSH helped ensure that cash is used both efficiently and effectively.

The combination of different areas of expertise and the longevity of the support provided by the Hub members resulted in CCD making exceptional progress and a holistic contribution towards to the Ukraine Regional Response, as well as building credibility of the Network.

The main **factor behind the SSH's success was its longevity and a fully funded multi-agency team**, which was able to be agile and provided the CVA response organisations in the response with ongoing support. It is therefore crucial to capitalise on the momentum created by the SSH to further strengthen the response and to avoid the risk of politicising it. Considering the Hub's success in Ukraine, **this initiative has potential for replication and global impact.**

> 'CCD is now gaining tremendous momentum in Ukraine and we need to see it continue.' -INGO CCD member

In August 2024 the member agencies agreed to formalise the CCD network in Ukraine. Subsequently, the Collaboration Facilitator led the development of a two-year strategy for CCD in Ukraine, which was endorsed by 22 signatories signing an accompanying MoU to the strategy. The strategy includes social protection, localisation, data interoperability and governance, and a holistic approach towards meeting needs through cash across sectors, as well as ongoing discussion and collaboration for the day-to-day optimisation of the humanitarian cash response.

> "The expertise that [the CCD Network] have mobilised [in Ukraine] is really valuable. We don't have the expected level of expertise for the massive response - additional NGO based expertise is really valuable."   - donor

SHARED SERVICES HUB
A Case Study on Collaboration Outcomes in Ukraine