LOCALISATION PILOT REVIEW OF THE CCD UKRAINE REGIONAL RESPONSE CONSORTIUM

HUMANITARIAN
IMPACT INSTITUTE
Inclusive Learning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DISASTERS
EMERGENCY
COMMITTEE

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

AAH	Action Against Hunger
BRCT	Biroul Regional Pentru Cooperare Transfrontaliera
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
CMU	Consortium Management Unit
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWG	Cash Working Group
DCA	Danish Church Aid
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
EQ	Evaluation Question
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCT	Group Cash Transfer
HII	Humanitarian Impact Institute
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International NGO
IP	Implementing Partner
JERU	Joint Emergency Response Ukraine
KII	Key Informant Interview
L/N	Local/National
LHL	Local Humanitarian Leadership
MPCA	Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
RT	Review Team
SCLR	Survivor and Community Led Responses
SC UK/Ukraine	Save the Children UK/Ukraine
ToT	Trainer of Trainers
UEP	Ukrainian Education Platform

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Collaborative Cash Delivery (CCD) Network is the largest network of NGOs committed to collaborating for improved impact of humanitarian cash programming. CCD member agencies - Save the Children UK (SCUK), Action Against Hunger Poland and Romania (AAH), Danish Church Aid (DCA), and Save the Children Ukraine (SC Ukraine) formed a CCD consortium which was funded by Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC). SCUK leads the consortium that is aimed at achieving transformative and innovative outcomes in Ukraine and in the broader regional humanitarian response. Other CCD members – Oxfam Ukraine & Poland, and the Joint Emergency Response Ukraine (JERU) - not funded by the consortium - joined the pilot initiative to participate in the collective learning process. The pilot tested localisation approaches in Ukraine, Poland and Romania which were funded by DEC alongside funds from SCUK, AAH and DCA for direct cash delivery[1].

Pilots are for Testing

The project was a pilot, so this Review has been designed and analysed through that lens in order to produce scalable lessons. **The core objective of a pilot project is to test and refine approaches, activities and formats *prior* to scaling or replication. This pilot was successful in that objective.**

While there were certainly operational challenges (in the context of an emergency humanitarian response), the pilot was able to identify promising approaches and models for future programming. Just as importantly, the pilot 'road tested' localisation approaches which enabled identification of key challenges that will need to be overcome if localisation is to progress further within both CCD and the partners – this is valuable information.

The project was mostly well conceived for the purpose of pilot-testing different models, as the pilot itself created an opportunity for organisations to test what works better. Five different approaches were included in the pilot testing. This enabled clear lessons to be learned that can be applied to ongoing and future projects in Ukraine and other contexts.

Models Tested

Six models were initially planned (summarised below), however Model 4 was never implemented.

Models 1, 3 and 5 primarily focused on NGOs and local government to address the needs of individuals through cash-based initiatives, such as MPCA. In contrast, Models 2 and 6 adopted a group-focused approach, with Model 2 concentrating on strengthening the collective capacity of Community Based Organisations (CBOs), grass-root level organisations and volunteer groups through Group Cash Transfers (GCTs). Model 6 emphasised group capacity strengthening through workshops and discussions with recipients of group cash. While

---

1   DEC does not provide funding for direct cash delivery for its 'Engine 2' initiatives which the localisation pilot was part of. Hence why supplementary funding was provided by the consortium member agencies to their local partners.

these models differed in their approaches, they all promoted localisation by empowering local actors, whether at the individual or group level, to play a central role in addressing the needs of affected populations.

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Agency					
SC Ukraine	DCA	ACF Romania	ACF Poland	Oxfam Ukraine & Poland	JERU
will	will	will	will	will	will
Approach					
Build institutional & technical capacity based on capacity assessments & needs, & increase access to direct funding	Build institutional & technical capacity based on capacity assessments & needs using its SCLR and GCT approaches	Build institutional & technical capacity based on capacity assessments & needs, & increase access to funding	Build capacity in advocacy, referral process, & linkages to livelihoods based on assessment and needs	Build capacity through learning grants, capacity building workshops & peer learning via local actor cash network platform	Build capacity by supporting implementation of & reflection on GCT modalities via workshops with partners & FGDs with group cash recipients

Technical Success

Within the pilot project, there were clear successes achieved, especially around effective capacity technical strengthening of L/N partners. In addition, some models appeared to achieve admirable levels of equity in partnerships between L/N partners and INGOs.

The humanitarian relief work was also largely effective, with the implementation of cash programmes through L/N partners. The project also provided L/N partners with exposure to different types of fundraising, organisational learning on safeguarding and capacity development on monitoring and evaluation – all of which was valued by L/N partners.

Disruptive Innovation

The pilot experienced challenges because its nature was to conduct what was effectively disruptive innovation within organisations in which the people, processes and resources are designed – and indirectly incentivised – to deliver programs differently to the pilot's objectives. This meant that in some CCD partner INGOs, the internal management support and enabling processes were not sufficient for the localisation innovation to reach its potential. This is a common phenomenon across all models used in the pilot. Innovations that disrupt normal business processes do not receive the internal support and facilitation they need unless they are somehow separated from 'business-as-usual' processes until mature enough to self-sustain. These challenges ranged from governance to innovation implementation and operational design.

For example, project day to day management was not strong enough for an innovation attempting to implement in a way that is contrary to how most of the consortium members operate. It resulted in confused and disjointed decision-making that enabled the pilot's objectives not to be the focus. This was

because there was insufficient clarity over the roles and responsibilities of the different decision-making powers, which included a Steering Committee, Consortium Management Unit (CMU), and the individual organisational management structures. The project faced challenges including role ambiguity, decision-making authorities and insufficient clarity and communication.

Project Level Lessons

There were examples of different bodies making contradictory decisions, creating confusion about the project's direction. As this confused decision-making was repeated over time, it created frustration and at times apathy *towards decision-making* within the diverse group of people responsible for achieving the pilot's objectives. The result was a vacuum of effective, strategic project leadership. Future projects will require a much more clearly defined, documented and understood decision-making structure to give the strategic goals of the project a more disciplined focus. This is critical wherever a pilot/project is attempting to conduct operations in a way that is contrary to the normal operations of the organisation; or if/when a pilot that requires close monitoring in order to identify the pilot's key learnings.

The most important impact of the governance structure was that the strategic-level document (the Localisation Framework) – which was intended to guide the project – was never effectively implemented at the project level or at the governance level. This led to a shift in the focus of the project away from achieving localisation objectives, and onto prioritising delivery at the project level.

There were also missed opportunities to test and learn about different approaches to localisation at the partner, project and consortium levels. The absence of effective localisation measurements was manifested in the gradual shift of focus to measurement of delivery – 'doing rather than learning'. To be clear, there was still learning, but it was less structured and comparable. For example, there is little comparable data from the five different approaches and partners within the project. By extension, the missed opportunities subsequently limited learning at all levels of programming within the project.

Localisation Lessons

Other lessons that can be applied in other contexts include the partner selection process. Here again there was a disconnect between the operational and strategic aims. Some of the L/N partners were small organisations with as few as three people. These smaller organisations inevitably have lower localisation ambitions (i.e., they are unlikely to have the resources, knowledge or orientation to help drive larger moves towards localised approaches in the humanitarian eco-system). The likelihood of these small organisations to secure international/institutional funding for MPCA due to their small sizes, was low. Smaller organisations are also unlikely to have the capacity to contribute to local humanitarian decision-making fora during or after the project funding period. It is also worth noting that it was unrealistic to plan for small L/N partners to deliver the full cash cycle. An opportunity for future localisation projects is to be deliberate in selecting a mix of L/N partners that will result

in a close match between a fuller range of (the strategically articulated) localisation principles being achieved sustainably.

The Review is clear that future pilots can be more ambitious with the level and type of localisation objectives that are incorporated into the design. The design should also be more aligned with the broader localisation objectives, commitments and ambitions of the INGOs.

Localisation projects also require a more comprehensive set of management decision-making processes created in the HQ's and country offices (COs) of INGO's in order to ensure that localisation objectives are more fully realised. Without this, the ability to advance on localisation will forever be limited.
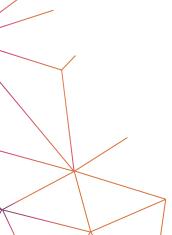
Outcome

The pilot project succeeded in testing different cash-based localization models and learning lessons from them. More comparable data across the consortium partners would have enabled a better analysis of results and provided more comprehensive lessons.

At the same time, the ambition could have been bigger in the design, while the absence of effective strategic leadership and governance and the practical limitations imposed by 'business as usual' structures in some INGOs, led to a dilution in the learning opportunity of the pilot. For future similar projects, a full-

time partnerships subject matter expert with a strong localisation focus, sufficient seniority, authority and influence across the consortium could help ensure that   operational decisions are linked aligned with strategic localisation goals. However, a change like this alone will not enable this type of innovation to be nurtured. The combined incentives of the 'business as usual' approach are too strong and will always be defaulted to if these projects are implemented in existing structures.

Ultimately, however, multiple models and approaches were tested, and it is clear which approaches should not be attempted again, and which models should be adopted in future. It was found that the Group Cash Transfers model and the Survivor and Community Led Responses model could likely provide a strong foundation for future localisation projects for cash delivery in similar contexts. The review found out that these two models fostered collective decision-making and resource pooling, which enhances community resilience and ensures more equitable distribution of aid. These models were particularly innovative for promoting culturally appropriate and community-based initiatives, such as establishing community safe spaces, which created a sense of ownership and encouraged diverse local initiatives. This was seen as an opportunity to move beyond traditional humanitarian interventions, enabling communities to implement tailored interventions that addressed their unique needs and priorities effectively.

INTRODUCTION

Project Overview

The Collaborative Cash Delivery (CCD) Network is a global network of international NGOs dedicated to improving the quality and delivery of cash and voucher assistance to those facing humanitarian crisis. The network includes 14 members that deliver cash and collectively address the systemic challenges in providing cash and voucher assistance to reach more families and children affected by crisis within 72 hours. The Ukraine Regional Response pilot project by CCD members was implemented in a consortium, led by

Save the Children UK (SCUK is tasked with implementing an inter-agency project funded by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) aimed at achieving transformative and innovative outcomes in Ukraine and in the broader regional humanitarian response. The project comprises four funded INGOs and two INGOs non funded by the project– Action Against Hunger[2] (AAH) Poland, Action Against Hunger (AAH) Romania, Danish Church Aid (DCA), and Save the Children Ukraine (SC Ukraine), along with two non-funded agencies – Oxfam Ukraine & Poland, and Joint Emergency Response Ukraine (JERU).

CCD Localisation Consortium:
- SC UK & Ukraine
- AAH Romania
- Oxfam Ukraine & Poland (Non-Funded)
- JERU (Non-Funded)
- AAH Poland
- DCA

---

2   In French, Action Against Hunger (AAH) is Action Contre La Faim (ACF).

The Collaborative Cash Delivery Network aims to:

1. **Test localisation models and partnership approaches** to improve humanitarian aid delivery.

2. **Improve accountability to affected people,** and better connect local and international responses through joint innovation and testing, shared collective capacities and inter operability among the CCD members.

3. **Improve collaboration** and inter agency learning and cross-fertilisation of ideas that are driven by, and more responsive to, the needs of the affected communities and local responders.

The development of CCD's Localisation Framework was based on the analysis of different localisation models[3] and existing studies on localisation. The impact statement of the CCD is formulated accordingly: *"Conflict affected communities experience an accountable, human centred and effective response to the Ukraine crisis that is locally led and upholds international standards in order to meet their immediate and recovery needs".*[4] Taking this impact statement into consideration, this review focuses on the first project outcome statement:

Outcome 1: Localisation: Local humanitarian actors have the institutional and technical capacity and funding to effectively and efficiently respond to conflict related humanitarian needs in Ukraine, Poland and Romania through quality cash programming in line with international humanitarian standards.

---

3   CCD. Localisation Framework Analysis. 2022.

4   CCD. Logical Framework. 2022.

CCD Localisation Models

The CCD Localisation consortium supported and funded four models (SC Ukraine, DCA, AAH Romania and AAH Poland), while Oxfam Ukraine & Poland and JERU implemented two additional models that were not funded under the CCD consortium.

The consortium partners aimed to test various models to bolster diversity among the local actors engaged in the Ukraine response, as summarised below.

Model 1: SC Ukraine implemented a localisation pilot, selecting three local NGOs in the eastern and central regions of Ukraine (with Sumy and Dnipro regions as indicative locations). These NGOs designed and delivered MPCA projects to address the basic needs of conflict-affected populations within their operational areas. Throughout the project cycle, local organisations received technical and operational support to ensure they possessed the necessary capacity for effective service delivery. Through this pilot, SC Ukraine aimed to ascertain the capacity requirements of local NGOs and identify the most effective methods for capacity strengthening in this context, with the goal of scaling these learnings across global and country programmes.

Model 2: DCA used a 2-level localisation model, working with a national agency, Ukrainian Education Platform (UEP), along with communities themselves, to identify, fund and monitor humanitarian interventions to meet the priority needs of communities impacted by conflict. This effort aimed to complement larger-scale humanitarian support, including household-level MPCA, while empowering

and reinforcing community structures that continued to play vital roles in the humanitarian response in Ukraine. This approach included capacity strengthening of UEP in Group Cash Transfers (GCT) using the Survivor and Community Led Responses (SCLR) model.

Model 3: AAH in Romania cascaded institutional and technical capacity through one national organisation, Biroul Regional Pentru Cooperare Transfrontaliera (BRCT), to three local organisations along the Romania–Ukraine border. With AAH's support, BRCT was expected to build the capacity of the smaller organisations working in the border areas to design and implement multipurpose cash assistance programming.

Model 4: AAH in Poland, where local governments were at times the first line of contact for refugees from Ukraine, aimed to increase local government capacity to better link refugees to the wider humanitarian response and social protection schemes that are available. Through this intervention, it was anticipated that local governments (including two regional and five district-level authorities) would be able to target and register beneficiaries for cash assistance and make referrals to social protection and livelihoods programmes.

Model 5: Oxfam Ukraine & Poland conducted capacity development through learning grants, capacity-building workshops, and peer learning via local actor cash network platforms and FGDs with group cash recipients. This model aimed to develop evidence-based localisation models that could be scaled through CCD.

Model 6: JERU focused on capacity strengthening by supporting the implementation of, and reflection on, GCT modalities through workshops with partners and FGDs with group cash recipients. The aim of this model was to understand how to assist national organisations in autonomously managing group cash programmes.

Models 1,3,4 and 5 primarily focused on **individual** assistance, empowering communities and governments to address the needs of individuals through cash-based initiatives, such as MPCA. In contrast, Models 2 and 6 adopted a **group-focused** approach, with Model 2 concentrating on strengthening the collective capacity of smaller organisations along border regions, while Model 6 emphasised group capacity strengthening through workshops and discussions with recipients of group cash. While these models differed in their approaches, they all promoted localisation by empowering local actors, whether at the individual or group level, to play a central role in addressing the needs of affected populations.

Throughout the implementation of the pilot, the implementing agencies shared capacities and harmonised approaches where appropriate. The consortium, hosted by Save the Children UK employed a Global Cash Trainer of Trainers (ToT) to train in-country cash trainers, resourced by SC Ukraine and AAH in Romania, through work shadowing, coaching/mentoring, and co-facilitating training workshops. The project also adopted a joint lessons-learned approach to bring different experiences together.

SCOPE OF THIS REVIEW

The project focused on the approaches to localisation and sought input from the agencies implementing the localisation models together with their local partners. While the end goal of all the models was to enable local agencies to effectively and efficiently support affected populations, the actual impact of the models on these populations is outside the scope of the review.

Review Objectives

The purpose of the review was to assess six localisation models against agreed criteria, and to generate recommendations on adapting and scaling the models in Ukraine and other contexts, if appropriate.

The objectives of the review were as follows:

A **Reflecting on the project design vs operationalisation** to establish whether the models were implemented as intended, to consider whether assumptions behind testing the models held, and to identify areas for improvement.

B **Assessment of the models using the following criteria:** relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. These criteria, and the Localisation Framework developed at the start of the project, were used to guide this review of the models. Please note that some of the criteria might not apply to the non-DEC-funded agencies.

C **Exploring unintended (positive and negative) effects** of the models on the local partners.

D **Developing recommendations** for adaptation and/or scaling of the models and design of equitable partnership models between local and international actors, based on the successfully operationalised approaches.

METHODOLOGY

This was a learning review with qualitative evaluation/review questions (EQs). The review team therefore used a qualitative, triangulated method with both primary and secondary data sources from partnering agencies, L/N partners, consortium members and the steering committee.

Secondary Data Review

The RT conducted a desk review of the project documents shared by the consortium management. The documents included, but were not limited to:

→ Localisation Review Terms of Reference (ToR)

→ Project proposal (including different phases)

→ Localisation Steering Committee (including models & framework)

→ CCD DEC Learning Agenda

→ CCD DEC Logical Framework

→ Master Tracker

→ Phase 2b Programme Proposal

→ Donor reports

→ Local Actors User Journey TOR

→ Local Partners User Journey interview notes/report

→ Lessons learnt reports/documentation from implementing partners (IPs)

→ Global Cash ToT Reflection Reports

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with Local Partners

The team interviewed 11 staff members from seven L/N partners about the impact and effectiveness of the implemented localisation models by the funded and non-funded partnering agencies.

KIIs with Consortium Implementing Partners

The team interviewed eight representatives of partnering and non-partnering agencies of the consortium. To save time and for practical purposes, these interviews were occasionally conducted jointly with the representatives of AAH, DCA, SC Ukraine, JERU and Oxfam Ukraine/Poland.

KIIs with Consortium Management Unit

The team conducted discussions with the consortium management unit. The aim of these interviews was to understand the perspectives of the CMU regarding design and execution of the project. The team interviewed the Localisation Steering Committee Lead, Localisation Advisor, former Consortium Manager, Global Cash ToT, MEAL Manager. In addition, the team interviewed SCUK Head of Humanitarian Transformation and SCUK Humanitarian Director who had additional knowledge about CCD having served on the network's Steering Group and the Board.

FGD with Localisation Steering Committee Members

For the FGD with Localisation Steering Committee Members (representative of JERU, AAH, DCA and BRCT), the RT aimed to gather diverse perspectives on the localisation efforts within the consortium. This FGD served as a platform for committee members to share their insights, experiences and recommendations regarding the localisation process.

Limitations

The review faced several challenges during the data collection phase. The primary issue was the non-participation of Oxfam Ukraine & Poland, the agency responsible for implementing Model 5. Oxfam representatives explained that their partners were unavailable because their contracts had ended, and staff had either left the organisation or were too preoccupied with their current workload to join the review.

Another significant limitation was the unavailability of some interviewees, particularly the local and national partners. Although the RT initially expected to interview 20 L/N partners, in the end only 11 key informants could be reached due to scheduling conflicts and Oxfam's withdrawal from the review.

To mitigate these setbacks, the review team extended the data collection period to accommodate more participants. The team further sought supplementary data from secondary sources to fill in any gaps.

FINDINGS

Project Design

Key Finding

The project created a significant opportunity for localisation, aiming to advance beyond existing practices by focusing on technical and institutional capacity strengthening. However, some elements of the technical design of the project did not adequately facilitate the application of these practices.

First, the project attempted to accomplish an excessive number of operational objectives within a short timeframe. This overambition led to a compression of activities that were critical to the project's success (such as comprehensive needs assessments and thorough stakeholder consultations), ultimately affecting the quality and efficacy of the outputs. The project could have been extended, doing so would have reduced these artificial pressures.

Both implementing partners and their L/N partners reported that they faced significant challenges in managing multiple tasks concurrently. The requirement to complete project outputs, engage in capacity-building activities, and sustain the full cycle of cash programming was reported to be overwhelming. This pressure resulted in operational inefficiencies and compromised the overall localisation agenda.

Aside from the timelines, the project's technical (not strategic) design was found to be unclear and confusing, lacking clear delineation of roles and responsibilities among stakeholders. This confusion also extended to decision-making power and implementation of the localisation agenda, negatively affecting the overarching aim of the project.

EQ1: Were the pilots implemented according to the intended plans? If there were any adaptations made to the models, what was the rationale behind those changes?

Model 1: The initial implementation of the SC Ukraine localisation pilot was conducted as originally planned, involving three local NGOs (Station Kharkiv, Slavic Heart, and Posmishka) from the eastern and central regions of Ukraine, with Sumy and Dnipro serving as indicative locations, which later shifted to Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk. These NGOs were responsible for designing and delivering MPCA programmes to address the basic needs of conflict-affected populations in their respective operational areas. The capacities of SC Ukraine's partners varied, although they all had previous experience with Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA). These differences in capacity made it challenging for all partners to adapt to SC Ukraine's requirements. One partner organisation, from Ukraine, consisted of only two volunteers, while another partner defined itself as the 'largest volunteer organisation in Ukraine', demonstrating inequalities between partner levels.

This issue had various impacts. One partner organisation reported that it had to expand its team size due to the constant demands and requirements that went beyond its capacities (such as implementing post-distribution monitoring – PDM – and implementing the full cash cycle).

Model 2: The implementation of the DCA localisation model was largely carried out as originally planned, with the key strategies and frameworks being followed closely. DCA collaborated with UEP and its local partners to reach communities with GCTs. *"Building on lessons learned from SCLR and Group Cash Transfers (GCT) tested in other contexts, DCA tested two-level localisation model under Phase 2a to empower UEP, a local agency, along with communities themselves to identify, fund, and monitor humanitarian interventions to meet priority needs of communities impacted by conflict".*[5]

Key informants from UEP and DCA highlighted several adjustments that were made during the implementation phase to better align with evolving circumstances and practical realities on the ground. According to the UEP representative, ongoing discussions after each project milestone assessed successes and challenges, enabling continuous improvement of their approach. A significant adaptation involved expanding the project's participant base beyond initially targeted locations to include organisations from big cities. This change was prompted by a shortage of available and suitable partners in the originally planned areas, revealing gaps in initial planning and stakeholder engagement strategies.

DCA and UEP collaborated to customise the methodologies and tools used in Ukraine, ensuring their relevance to local needs. The UEP partner acknowledged that this process of adaptation took time during implementation but proved beneficial. However, the partner also found that insufficient time allocated to the preparation phase posed challenges in effectively tailoring the project to the local context.

Model 3: AAH's localisation approach in Romania followed its originally planned structure, aiming to decentralise institutional and technical capacities through collaboration with one national partner, BRCT, along with three other, smaller local partners. Interviews with AAH staff and local partners revealed that while the model was largely executed as intended, there were adjustments in the sequencing of activities due to initial design challenges.

Complications arose as AAH's partners had prior commitments with other donors and different funding streams, leading to a sequencing of activities whereby partners began project implementation, then undertook capacity-building activities, and then resumed project implementation. This sequence caused confusion and hampered institutionalisation in capacity strengthening.

Moreover, representatives from BRCT, AAH and CMU noted that the roles and responsibilities regarding the scope of the capacity strengthening were unclear within the CCD design. Time constraints caused by delays led the Global Cash ToT to deliver training directly to local NGO staff to expedite the delivery of MPCA to affected communities.[6]

---

5   CCD DEC Proposal Collective Initiatives – Project Proposal 2b. 2023.
6   Global Cash ToT. Romania Localisation Model Global Cash ToT Reflections V3.

This adjustment, while necessary to avoid further delays affected the overall model and its impact due to ongoing uncertainties surrounding project roles and responsibilities.

Model 4: As stated in AAH's Learning Exercise for Poland report,[7] AAH developed the pilot project in collaboration with local authorities in border areas to enhance their ability to provide cash assistance to Ukrainian refugees. The aim was to improve local authorities' capacity in humanitarian response and social protection schemes. The intervention involved training and supporting local governments, including two regional and five district-level administrations, to identify, register and refer beneficiaries for cash assistance, as well as for social protection and livelihood projects. However, the model could not be implemented.

AAH's model in Poland has been removed due to "a change in context in Poland (local governments are not delivering the full cycle of MPCA in Poland but are dealing with refugee registration only), and a lack of commitment from local governments to engage with capacity strengthening activities".[8] AAH staff explained the reasons for the non-implementation as: insufficient planning at the design phase; the design being contrary to the government mandate; and challenges in the early implementation.

Model 6: According to key informants, JERU's model was implemented as originally designed. While there was no significant technical or institutional capacity strengthening achieved during the implementation, there was consistent provision of technical support from JERU[9]. JERU was a non-DEC-funded partner in the CCD localisation pilot, and therefore did not receive any allocations for capacity strengthening under the CCD pilot.

EQ2: Did the assumptions made at the design stage hold when the models were implemented? Were there any identified gaps or shortcomings within the initial design?

Several key assumptions shaped the initial design and approach of the models. One primary assumption was that there would be high levels of interest and active engagement from both local organisations and local authorities to implement a full-cycle cash distribution for humanitarian aid. However, results from implementation of the pilot indicated that while local organisations showed significant interest, local authorities, particularly in Poland, did not engage with AAH at the expected level to implement full-cycle cash programming.

Another assumption was that INGOs would possess sufficient capacity to transfer knowledge effectively to local organisations. However, INGOs encountered challenges such as staffing limitations, implementation issues and time constraints. Many interviewed implementing partner (IP) staff appreciated the opportunity for innovative approaches but noted that the project added significantly to their workload without adequate prior planning or resource allocation. This oversight in resource planning hindered operational flexibility and sustainability.

Furthermore, the assumption that local NGOs could be empowered to manage the entire cash cycle was challenged. Although efforts to

---

7   Annex 20_CCD Poland_Learning Exercise_Report_2024.

8   CCD DEC Proposal Collective Initiatives – Project Proposal 2b. 2023.

9   Oxfam (Model 5) did not want to participate (did not have the capacity) and JERU had limited engagement with the review. JERU also highlighted that they haven't fully understood their role in the pilot..

build technical capacity among local NGOs were successful, the lack of ongoing funding undermined sustainability. Local NGOs reported having the skills but lacking the financial and systemic resources to maintain and expand their operations.

Overall, the project faced challenges in governance. This led to decision-making that was unfocused on strategic objectives of the pilot because of unclear roles among the Steering Committee (SC), CMU and individual organisational structures. The SC was comprised of representatives of the INGOs and two representatives of local NGOs (BRCT and UEP) and aimed to oversee the localisation-related decision-making, including the implementation of the localisation framework and learning plan. However, the SC cannot of course have decision-making authority internally within each partner in the project, which in turn contributed to uncertain accountability lines amongst staff given the nature of the pilot. Conflicting decisions among these bodies created confusion and undermined effective leadership, leading to misunderstanding towards decision-making and affecting project direction. Many CMU members, local partners and implementing partners found the project structure confusing.

This confusion occasionally led to disagreements over localisation decisions. For instance, CMU key informants supported a more flexible approach for smaller local partners, advocating for some major requirements, such as complex PDMs, to be removed or tailored to suit the capacities of specific local partners. However, these decisions were not always approved by the IPs, highlighting a shortcoming in management and decision-making. Overall, there was a

lack of concise and clear messaging to the L/N partners and a gap in decision-making authority. Similar concerns were reported during the FGD with the Steering Committee.

Participants in the FGD all said that they were unsure of CCD's role in decision-making related to localisation.

> *"I think, we never had the decision-making power as the steering committee. I am not sure who had. I guess the decision-making power was with the IPs (INGOs) "*
>
> - FGD, Steering Committee Member

Innovation Structures

The pilot faced significant challenges due to its inherent disruptive nature within organizations where existing structures—both in terms of personnel and operational processes—were geared towards delivering programs according to established norms rather than embracing innovative localisation efforts.

This mismatch often meant that partner INGOs involved in the CCD initiative lacked adequate internal management support, clear governance structures, and enabling processes necessary to fully leverage the potential of localisation innovations.

This results in significant friction between the innovation and the rest of the organisation. The result is almost always that the innovation is unable to reach its potential. As HII seen in many other projects, this results in the innovation being terminated before it can self sustain. This pilot concluded as planned, but as with many other projects, there was considerable friction between the innovation and the wider organisation.

It is almost certain that these challenges will persist and will hold advancement on localisation back in these organisations. The partners existing structures, processes and personnel are just too efficient in their current approaches.

If CCD partners wish to advance localisation further, they must prioritise governance structures, clear organisational setups, and the right functions that support local or national leadership and ensure autonomy from traditional INGO operations. What this means will be different for each member of CCD but ultimately must include much greater levels of autonomy and independence for localisation initiatives until they become self sustaining.

This could include:

- Establishing their own localisation subsidiary capable of building the people, processes and structures from scratch, that are necessary for achieving localisation ambitions.

- Creating a business unit within the parent that does not need to use existing business practices or policies that would hold localisation back.

- Establishing a method of bypassing processes, systems, leadership and practices that will create terminal friction on localisation.

This is the biggest and most important lesson from this pilot.

Assessment of Models - Relevance

Key Finding

The models were contextually relevant and aligned with the needs of both the implementation context and the partner organisations. However, several issues limited their effectiveness. Smaller local organisations faced challenges in managing the 'full cycle' of cash programming due to limited financial and human resources. Relevance of country-level localisation models were impacted from the implementation-related challenges. Decision on not to fund the field-level activities impacted the implementation timelines, and therefore relevance of cash programmes in Romania. Additionally, the structural bottlenecks and inflexibility of the international aid system further hindered the models from reaching their full potential. The Localisation Framework lacked clarity in its application and definition of roles, leading to missed opportunities in achieving the project's strategic objectives. Despite these issues, the integration of community-focussed approaches, such as GCTs and SCLRs, showcased promising opportunities for future projects.

EQ3: Were the models contextually relevant and aligned with the needs of both the implementation context and partner organisations?[10]

During the implementation of the project, cash programming was still highly relevant for the Ukrainian IDPs and conflict affected populations. The consortium's project proposal highlighted significant challenges faced by Ukrainian internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly concerning employment and access to cash by any means (including the banking system). The project proposal referred to the CALP's briefing paper in 2022,[11] which reported discrimination against Ukrainian IDPs in employment and access to banking, revealing systemic barriers hindering their socio-economic integration in neighbouring countries. The lack of adequate funding to support all self-registered applicants under a status-based approach further complicated the aid distribution process.

During the contextual assessment in Ukraine, Romania and Poland, local actors took the lead and worked with the IPs. CCD visits to Poland and Romania identified critical issues, including insufficient and underfunded humanitarian cash coordination systems, overlapping and incomplete cash assistance efforts, and significant delays in aid distribution. Additionally, challenges in establishing effective data management systems to support project design, adaptations and learning were observed.

Beyond contextual challenges, structural bottlenecks in the international humanitarian assistance system and the inflexibility of mainstream aid delivery models were identified as contributing factors. Addressing these challenges required collaborative action among humanitarian actors in Ukraine to innovate and test new approaches, enhance community involvement in aid delivery design, empower affected communities by giving them greater control over their personal information, and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of cash assistance through evidence-based, real-time learning initiatives.

All interviewed L/N partners found the models and the idea of cash programming relevant, but small organisations reported facing challenges in implementing the 'full cycle' standard means of cash programming. These challenges included limited financial and human resources, which impeded their ability to manage and distribute cash assistance efficiently. As a result, these smaller entities often encountered operational difficulties that hindered the full realization of the models' potential benefits.

Partners with limited funding struggled to sustain the technical capacity-building initiatives implemented during the project. Despite initial gains, ongoing financial constraints hampered their ability to maintain and expand technical skills and capabilities over the long term. This reduced their effectiveness in contributing to the project's objectives and may have limited their ability to adapt to changing project requirements or external conditions.

Additionally, routine project delays such as the recruitment of the CMU and individual partner funding processes impacted the relevance of cash programmes. Consequently, AAH's Romania partners began the cash programming first under the DEC grant, followed by Cash

---

10 Analysis of this question excluded Model 4 because the model was never implemented.

11 CALP. Rapid Reflection on Cash Coordination for the Ukraine Response. 2022; the CALP Network is a global network of organisations engaged in policy, practice and research in humanitarian cash and voucher assistance.

Capacity Strengthening efforts. This sequence affected the relevance and effectiveness of the trainings for the partners, as they were conducted after the cash programming had already started. This was confirmed by interviewed AAH staff, local partners, and BRCT members.

GCTs and SCLRs emerged as particularly relevant within the project context, showcasing their potential to address specific needs or gaps effectively through direct community engagement. As noted by seven KIIs, these approaches demonstrated clear benefits such as improved efficiency in resource distribution, enhanced community cohesion, or increased empowerment among affected populations. The success of GCTs suggests promising opportunities for scaling or integrating similar approaches into future projects or programmes.

EQ4: How relevant was the project Localisation Framework to the models?

The Localisation Framework of the project was developed through analysing existing frameworks and identifying the optimal requirements for the CCD Ukraine pilot. This development process considered several influential documents and principles, ensuring a robust and comprehensive approach to localisation.

The key documents and principles that served as the foundation for this framework included:

1   Grand Bargain (2016):[12]
Over 50 of the biggest donors and aid providers made a global commitment to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

2   NEAR Network Principles:[13]
These principles focus on empowering local actors and ensuring that local perspectives are at the forefront of humanitarian responses.

3   Charter for Change:
An initiative aimed at transforming the way the humanitarian system operates to ensure that more support and funding go directly to local and national actors.

4   Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS): [14]
A standard that sets out the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian action.

The main objective of the Localisation Framework was to set a technical standard for the localisation principles of the pilot. By integrating principles from these key documents, the framework aimed to enhance transparency and accountability; promote recognition and inclusion of local partners; and improve coordination and integration. While the initiative was undoubtedly important, the process by which the framework would be integrated into humanitarian responses was largely unclear. Comments from stakeholders (all interviewed IPs, Steering Committee members and two CMU members) indicated a lack of clarity on how the framework should have been integrated, suggesting the need for better communication and training on its application.

The framework included various indicators to measure the achievement of the localisation goal. However, the linkages between

---

12 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2016). Grand Bargain: A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need.

13 NEAR Network for Empowered Aid Response. (2013)

14 Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability. (2018 version).

localisation agendas, and a clear definition of roles across the consortium, were lacking.

For example, two of the indicators were:

- Number of partnerships with transparent financial transactions

- Instances of local partners being recognised.

However, there was no indication of who would be responsible for monitoring and reporting on these indicators, leading to confusion and inefficiencies in tracking progress. Two of the interviewed key informants from CMU noted that after the Localisation Framework was created, it was never looked at again. One CMU member was unsure of the purpose of the framework. Overall, the Localisation Framework – the strategic-level document that was supposed to guide the project – was never effectively implemented at the project level or the governance level, resulting in a missed opportunity to achieve localisation objectives.

Assessment of Models - Effectiveness

Key Finding

The assessment revealed both successes and challenges across the implemented models. Positive outcomes included improved technical capacities in cash programming, reflecting effective capacity strengthening initiatives. However, organisational capacity strengthening showed variability, highlighting the need for more tailored support.

Moreover, difficulties were identified in fully integrating localisation principles, which affected decision-making and local ownership in humanitarian responses. Communication barriers and differing perspectives on project oversight emerged as significant issues, influencing partnership dynamics. The review highlighted the importance of context-sensitive approaches and balanced capacity-building efforts to foster sustainable and equitable partnerships.

EQ5: Did the models achieve their objectives of creating and maintaining equitable relationships?

Nine of the 11 interviewed partners (the exceptions being two partners in Ukraine) noted that the partnership approach to cash interventions differed significantly from previous collaborations with other NGOs, particularly due to inclusive practices and a constant effort for engagement by the INGO staff. The local partners in Romania noted that AAH's approach to the partnership acknowledged the complexities involved in project activities and recognised the need for additional support to help local partners navigate these challenges effectively. Although there was an intermediary national partner, BRCT, all three partners confirmed that AAH

staff provided constant technical support and engagement with the local partners. By the project's second phase, local partners were more involved in decision-making, which enhanced equity. Two of the interviewed partners noted that they had initially hesitated to provide feedback, but AAH's response to critical feedback was constructive. Channels such as WhatsApp or ad hoc Zoom meetings were listed as easy and quick ways for communication.

> *"(...) We could talk about any issues we had when we met for in-person training sessions as well as on WhatsApp. If something was more urgent, we communicated through WhatsApp. We also had Zoom meetings with the project manager where the whole team would participate. The communication was very efficient."*
>
> - KII with Local Partner, Romania

In the context of group cash transfers, Models 2 and 6 adopted distinct approaches. Model 2 used an intermediary national agency (UEP) alongside local partners, whereas Model 6 directly transferred funds to communities through a single local partner. Feedback from JERU's local partner highlighted that Model 6 facilitated more efficient communication and faster fund transfers, establishing a direct and equitable relationship. This direct approach not only streamlined operational processes but also empowered the local partner by enhancing its autonomy and decision-making ability within the project framework. By minimising

layers of intermediaries, Model 6 promoted clearer communication channels and a more transparent flow of funds, which contributed to a stronger sense of partnership and mutual trust between the implementing organisation and the local partner.

Model 1 was the only model that encountered significant challenges in establishing and maintaining equitable relationships. Despite Save the Children Ukraine's commitment to promoting meaningful participation of Ukrainian civil society organisations (CSOs) in humanitarian coordination, as stated in their proposal, the implementation of the model did not fully adhere to localisation principles. Feedback from two interviewed partner organisations (involving six staff members) indicated that the IP requested standard processes, such as English reporting, which were not part of the original project plan, leading to tensions with local partners.

> *"We faced a major obstacle for our organisation because the majority of our team members are not fluent in English. While some understand it and one colleague speaks English, Ukrainian remains our primary language. Unfortunately, the reporting was requested in English, making it very challenging to achieve."*
>
> - KII with Local Partner, Ukraine

Another Ukrainian partner referred to the different localisation approaches between the CCD management and the IPs.

"There seemed to be a disconnect in how processes were organised between our IP and CCD. CCD positioned this project as a pilot where implementers would have direct responsibility and minimal reporting requirements. However, our INGO partner had a different perspective; they believed they needed to oversee every aspect of our operations. Their reporting demands were complex, compounded by frequent staff turnover. Between December and March, we had four different financial managers, each with their own reporting methods. When payments commenced in March, the reporting forms were only finalised in April. This delay meant we couldn't develop necessary documents until after payments were disbursed. It wasn't until April that we managed to justify attaching beneficiary agreements as proof of our activities."

- KII with Local Partner, Ukraine

These findings highlight a significant missed opportunity for the project to fully integrate the Localisation Framework and foster a common understanding of its principles. Using the framework more effectively could have created a shared understanding among stakeholders on localisation and what this project could achieve in local capacity strengthening.

Within the project's design, achieving equitable relationships was hindered by a lack of consideration for other essential aspects of local humanitarian leadership (LHL) such as empowering local organisations and ensuring

inclusive decision-making processes. For instance, the majority of the L/N partners did not participate in the design of the project, and general local considerations were not necessarily taken into account. Regular communication and flexible approaches alone were insufficient to compensate for these critical components but were undoubtedly valuable in maintaining operational fluidity and coordination. A critical finding of this review centres on the concept of localisation: the current implementation models were observed to prioritise aid delivery by international NGOs with less focus on empowering local organisations. This led to limited opportunities for meaningful capacity exchange. The review also highlighted a lack of awareness among some INGO staff regarding essential localisation principles, such as promoting local leadership in humanitarian responses.

There was minimal support identified for local NGOs to actively participate in decision-making fora that shape the direction and strategies of humanitarian responses in Ukraine. While this was not an objective of the pilot, it is a core principle of localisation – 'nothing about us without us' – and should be included in future designs. That said, each LNGO became a member of the Cash Working Group (CWG) by the end of the pilot and there were discussions between the CWG and local and national NGOs on the topic of the transfer value. This resulted in the CWG agreeing to review the value and subsequently increasing it. This is an illustrative example of effective consultation with L/N partners but not of transferring power and decision-making to L/N partners because the decision was taken by the CWG (not L/N partners) despite the need being clear.

EQ6: To what extent did the models result in strengthened organisational and technical capacity for local partners?

The assessment of various models aimed at strengthening organisational and technical capacities for local partners provides several insights into their effectiveness.

From August 2023 to March 2024, support was provided for cash capacity strengthening and organisational capacity strengthening. Originally planned to start in April 2023, delays occurred due to the Global Cash ToT not being in place until June 2023.[15] Cash capacity strengthening began with conducting Cash Capacity Assessments for each L/N partner to inform their development plans. This approach ensured that support was tailored to the specific needs of each organisation, avoiding assumptions about their existing knowledge and capacity.

In Romania, the plan was for the Global Cash ToT to develop materials to be cascaded to two in-country cash trainers. Due to uncertainties and time constraints caused by delays, the Global Cash ToT directly trained local NGO staff to expedite MPCA delivery to affected communities. However, this approach may have impacted the model's overall effectiveness, given the ongoing uncertainties surrounding project roles and responsibilities.

In Ukraine, three partners highlighted specific challenges related to the language and contextualisation of trainings. The trainings were conducted in a manner that did not fully consider local language needs and contextual nuances, making it difficult for participants to fully grasp the content. Problems related to translation were also reported. Additionally, the duration of the three-day training sessions was found to be insufficient for digesting all the information, indicating a need for extended or more intensive trainings.

All interviewed L/N partners reported a significant improvement in their technical capacities, particularly in cash programming. However, there were notable differences between the strengthening of organisational versus technical capacities. While technical training was effective, organisational capacity strengthening varied, suggesting a need for more balanced and comprehensive capacity-building efforts. Local partners in Romania referred to the trainings as successful; however, as mentioned in the earlier stages of the review, the sequencing of implementation and training played a negative role. The sequencing of implementation and training played a negative role because it led to challenges such as the misalignment of training content with the previous learnings of the partners. This occasionally caused confusion and hindered the effective integration of new skills and practices, ultimately diminishing the impact and sustainability of the capacity-building efforts.

Despite these challenges, the five partners who reported receiving the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) and safeguarding trainings indicated that the trainings were useful, providing essential skills and knowledge that partners could apply directly in their work.

---

15 CCD CI topline narrative report-March 2024_V1.

Assessment of Models - Impact

Key Finding

The impact of different localisation models on local partners demonstrated both positive outcomes and challenges. Effective technical capacity development through targeted training in cash programming enhanced local partners' technical skills and confidence. However, the sustainability and long-term success of initiatives depended heavily on appropriate partner selection and institutional capacity development.

Models that prioritised direct community engagement and responsive service delivery were particularly valued by local partners, fostering trust and effective aid delivery. Conversely, unintended negative effects included organisational strain from recruitment pressures and underestimations of workload, leading to potential burnout among staff. Inadequate processes from some INGOs further burdened local partners, underscoring the need for improved support mechanisms and realistic project planning to enhance operational efficiency and mitigate challenges in future collaborations.

EQ7: What were the local partners' perceptions of the models, and what impact did the models have on the local partners?

The impact on local partners of the various models implemented by different INGOs varied significantly, reflecting both positive outcomes and challenges. Across these models, capacity strengthening and learning emerged as pivotal factors influencing how local partners perceived their engagement. Partnerships that prioritised effective training and skill development in programming led to positive responses, with local partners reporting enhanced technical capabilities and increased confidence in project implementation.

However, the selection of partners by INGOs played a critical role in determining the sustainability and long-term impact of these initiatives. Partnerships that aligned effectively with local contexts and priorities demonstrated greater potential for sustainability, whereas mismatches in partner selection sometimes

hindered the effectiveness and longevity of project outcomes.

Moreover, the models showcased different approaches to community engagement, particularly notable in GCT initiatives and service delivery mechanisms. Local partners appreciated models that facilitated direct community engagement and responsive service provision, citing these as effective in meeting local needs and fostering community trust.

Overall, while the impact of the models varied, their effectiveness was closely tied to how well they addressed local capacities, engaged communities, and aligned with localisation principles.

EQ8: Have there been any unintended effects (positive or negative) of the models on the local partners?

Positively, the models have motivated local partners to adopt innovative approaches. Nine out of 11 L/N partners expressed a readiness

to experiment with new methodologies in future projects. This exposure seemed to empower local partners to explore creative solutions to challenges in aid delivery, potentially transforming their operational approaches.

However, negative unintended effects have surfaced as well. Three small partners in Romania and Ukraine reported recruiting additional personnel specifically for this project. While addressing immediate project needs, these recruitment decisions strained organisational resources and capacity in the long term.

Moreover, underestimations of workload and of the burden of responsibilities assigned to local partners and IPs led to increased stress and potential burnout among some staff. These challenges have impacted overall well-being and organisational effectiveness, highlighting the importance of realistic workload assessments and support mechanisms.

Furthermore, inadequate processes and procedures from some partner INGOs contributed to financial and operational burdens on local partners, exacerbating challenges in project management and resource allocation.

Assessment of Models - Sustainability

Key Finding

Financial sustainability poses significant challenges for cash programming initiatives, particularly in Romania where local partners struggle to access donor funding, impacting their ability to sustain project activities over the long term.

Amidst these challenges, there is resilience in capacity-building efforts among local and national actors working in the Ukraine response. The technical capacity-building efforts showed potential in increasing local partners' capabilities and confidence, thereby contributing to sustained project impact.

The sustainability and long-term success of these initiatives primarily hinged on effective partner selection and robust institutional capacity development.

EQ9: **To what extent are the benefits of the models expected to last, with local partners intending to cascade capacity-building efforts further, secure funding streams, and continue cash programming in line with equitable partnership models?**

Of the six models, only two implementing partners (representatives of Model 2 and Model 6) reported that they would continue implementing similar cash programming

partnership models. During the FGD with the Steering Committee members, a representative from JERU (Model 6) noted that funds had been secured for future implementation. Representatives from Model 1 indicated plans and possibilities for continuation, although nothing was certain at the time of the review. For Model 3, AAH (Romania) is closing its mission, and the interviewed staff expressed uncertainty about the sustainability of the model's benefits.

Regarding the sustainability of capacity strengthening, Ukrainian and Romanian L/N partners expressed optimism that capacity-building efforts would endure, particularly among national actors, such as the BRCT. A majority of AAH staff expected that the capacity development for the national agency, BRCT, would remain with the organisation. However, one key informant questioned whether "the capacity would stay with the people", citing limited institutional capacity development due to the project's short duration. Despite the tight timeline and the pilot structure, institutional capacity was strengthened to a small extent.

Financial sustainability emerged as a critical issue, particularly in Romania, where the lack of donor funding poses a significant obstacle for local partners wishing to continue their initiatives. This financial challenge was echoed by partners in Ukraine, who are seeking opportunities amidst limited donor calls for cash projects. Out of 11 L/N partners, one organisation in Ukraine reported to have secured future funding from an international donor. Six organisations (in Ukraine and Romania) were actively seeking or intending to seek funding. Three organisations (one in Ukraine and two in Romania) were uncertain or had no clear plans toward securing future funding.

Concerns lingered among some respondents about whether local partners were fully equipped to manage projects autonomously. Four IP members suggested that L/N partners would need ongoing monitoring and support to ensure sustained effectiveness. Structurally, criticisms were raised about the complexity of project frameworks and the clarity of roles within the Steering Committee. Such responses ran counter to the project's Localisation

Framework, which emphasised local ownership and capacity development, highlighting a need for joint understanding of localisation amongst INGO staff.

EQ10: Additionally, to what extent do consortium members, both funded and non-funded, plan to continue using localisation models in cash programming?

The review identified gaps in lessons learned from cash-based programming, suggesting a potential shortfall in systematically capturing and applying insights across participating organisations. Nonetheless, positive experiences in Ukraine were noted, particularly through collaborations with local partners, including the CCD initiative, which proved beneficial in enhancing support and knowledge exchange among organisations engaged in cash programming initiatives.

Looking ahead, IPs generally expressed commitment to maintaining localisation models or localised approaches. AAH staff reported hesitations about the continuity of the models due to the closure of operations in Romania and Ukraine. Staff involved in Model 2 and Model 6 indicated intentions to sustain these models, with strong donor interest in GCT and SCLR. These plans aim to build on past successes and address areas for improvement to enhance the effectiveness of cash programming efforts.

Challenges and future considerations were also acknowledged. These included the need for stronger engagement and buy-in from local organisations to ensure effective capacity strengthening. Power imbalances were evident, pointing to the importance of mutual learning rather than mere knowledge transfer. Addressing barriers to sustainability and equitable partnerships, responses

highlighted the significance of mutual information exchange and adoption of diverse, efficient approaches beyond traditional Western methodologies, or 'business as usual' perspectives.

EQ11: To what extent can the models (or parts of the models) be adapted and scaled in the context of cash programming in Ukraine and other situations?

Looking forward, all respondents were optimistic regarding the scalability of these partnership models to other contexts, albeit with necessary adaptations. All IP staff believed in the transferability of lessons learned, particularly in terms of involving local partners in coordination and design.

To facilitate adaptation of the models in different contexts, some key themes appeared:

A **Contextual Considerations:** Factors such as the political environment and local governance dynamics, as evidenced by the Poland example, were identified as influential in determining the feasibility of replicating or adopting these models. Partners emphasised the importance of conducting thorough contextual assessments, underscoring the need for adequate allocation of time and resources during preparation phases to ensure the successful implementation of these models.

B **Replicability Challenges:** There is uncertainty whether the models can be replicated in different contexts due to varying legislative frameworks and community needs. The IPs acknowledged that the experiences from Ukraine may not be universally applicable to other regions, such as Africa or Asia, due to different socio-political and economic conditions. Feasibility should be assessed before implementing any cash modalities in a new context.

C **Positive Transferable Elements:** Despite challenges, certain aspects of the partnership model were seen as transferable. For instance, the cascading training approach, using a national partner to transfer capacity to smaller partners, was highlighted as potentially beneficial in other settings to streamline operations and utilise local knowledge effectively.

D **Involvement of L/N Partners during the Design Phase:** Involving local and national actors in the design phase was highlighted as crucial for tailoring the models to fit specific contextual needs and fostering local ownership, ensuring successful implementation during preparation phases.

CONCLUSIONS

The pilot project design initially presented significant opportunities for both the implementing partners and the L/N partners – it was well conceived overall. During the project's inception, the consortium ambitiously planned extensive localisation efforts for the pilot phase. However, these ambitions were scaled back due to time and resource constraints and a focus on instead achieving an ambitious scale of operational delivery in a constrained timeframe.

Nonetheless, the project facilitated an evidence-based comparison and implementation of different localisation models. Notably, the analysis revealed that Group Cash Transfer models engendered opportunities for communities that typically lie outside the conventional scope of humanitarian assistance. L/N partners and IPs observed that communities undertook substantial projects with the cash transfers, highlighting the potential for community-led assistance. Such initiatives demonstrated promising prospects for future opportunities, underscoring the need for further understanding and research on GCT and SCLR models, which appear to hold considerable promise for certain localisation approaches.

Furthermore, while gaps in lessons learned were identified, particularly in the systematic capture and application of lessons across multiple organisations, the commitment to continuing and expanding capacity strengthening remains resolute. The project demonstrates concrete efforts in sustaining capacity strengthening through specific initiatives, such as delivering cash technical capacity strengthening by in-country cash trainer to a wider group of L/N partners who are part of CCD newly established Community of Practice in Ukraine.

At a technical level, the project enabled enhanced engagement and buy-in from local organisations and INGOs towards localisation. There was also recognition of potential power imbalances and the imperative of mutual learning rather than mere knowledge transfer. This underscored the importance of adhering to localisation and humanitarian principles, fostering equitable partnerships, and ensuring that local actors assume a central role in decision-making processes.

The pilot yielded significant insights and directions for future endeavours. Addressing the identified gaps and capitalising on the successful elements of the pilot could enable consortium members to further their localisation objectives and improve the effectiveness of cash programming initiatives.

Of most importance, is the conclusion that localisation will not advance much further within existing organisational structures within the INGOs involved in this pilot. The people, processes and resources are too aligned with existing ways of operating to allow localisation to take-hold. Advancing localisation will require a more fundamental structural change within or alongside these INGOs for it to advance further.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

To advance localisation significantly, CCD member agencies need to consider how to structure and autonomize innovations for success at both the HQ and country levels. This may involve creating separate but linked organisational structures focused exclusively on localisation or establishing semi-autonomous business units dedicated to localized responses. Such changes are crucial for eliminating structural, cultural, and compliance barriers and achieving long-term localisation goals. Whatever these structures look like, they must also ensure that the staff profiles (orientation to localisation, innovation and their expertise) match the strategic intent as the priority, rather than the operational level driving the strategic.

Recommendation 2

DEC–as a leading funder of localisation initiatives–should assume a greater 'leadership-by-modelling' role in enabling localisation in the donor-funding eco-system. This should be conceptualised as holistically as possible, but should include at a minimum:

1 **Create a flexible funding stream for advanced localisation learning,** with the stream providing space to stimulate and nurture localisation innovations (that by definition require more time, design, resources, measurement and specialist focus).

2 **Incentivise members** to structure and govern localisation for success.

3 **Tailor** (and communicate to members and downstream local/national actors) **compliance** requirements designed for localisation.

4 **Position DEC** to prepare members for more coordinated collective action on localisation (either through DEC or a DEC member) initiatives that have transformative impacts; playing a more active role in facilitating and bringing together partnerships and localisation activities; and addressing the underlining barriers identified in this and other localisation reports, such as developing and delivering advanced courses on real-life localisation lessons (from across DEC's members) and how to overcome them in emergency and development settings.

5 **Enhance coordination** of existing and future efforts amongst members on localisation. This could include playing a more active role in facilitating partnerships and fostering collective action. If direct funding is not feasible, DEC should consider funding its members to establish a localisation collective action unit.

Recommendation 3

In current and future similar projects, there should be a clear and simple ultimate point of accountability (i.e., single person or entity/body) with decision-making authority to ensure that the localisation (or other strategic objectives) is realised at the operational level. This is even more important where the project is a consortium. These governance structures need to be clearly communicated and understood.

Recommendation 4

Create and maintain (across all CCD, IPs and local partner management and project teams) a clearer and more harmonised understanding of localisation definitions, principles, practices, processes and lessons learned from previous localisation projects. As a change-making project, this includes allocating more time and qualified/experienced/knowledgeable resources to ensure these are embedded into all technical elements of operational programming and maintained throughout the project until it becomes self-sustaining. Explore and consider the alignment of partner localisation ambitions ahead of engaging them in new initiatives.

Recommendation 5

Incorporate Localisation Framework indicators into the donor-approved project logframe (and then measure them consistently) to produce comparable data across the different models and approaches in future similar CCD projects. A more structured design phase (see recommendation 7) would help enable this.

Recommendation 6

Future local/national (L/N) partner selection should be better aligned with the identified localisation objectives and the program modalities. This should eliminate mismatches in L/N partner capacity to achieve local humanitarian leadership and effective program delivery during implementation, and sustainability when CCD's Response phases out. Specifically, this should match the unique individual objectives, ambitions (for LHL) and capacities of each L/N potential partner to the strategic localisation objectives of the project. In addition, each L/N partner needs to be flexibly considered and included on a basis unique to their profile (goals, capacities, ambitions) with time allocated for this.

Recommendation 7

When considering future innovation projects requiring substantial change from 'business as usual' processes, CCD should apply a disciplined approach to design and kick-off (that includes local/national partners where they are pre-identified) that is well resourced, has space and time and is only started once key management personnel are recruited and in-place. This design and kick-off approach should then be focused on designing how the strategic innovation goals will be embedded into all elements of the project.

Recommendation 8

CCD should identify more opportunities to deliver and evaluate Group Cash Transfers (GCT) and Survivor and Community Led Responses (SCLR) as a key approach for advancing localisation and power shifting in appropriate contexts.

ANNEX 1: SUMMARY OF THE MODELS

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Agency	SC Ukraine	DCA	ACF Romania	ACF Poland	Oxfam Ukraine & Poland	JERU
	will	will	will	will	will	will
Approach	Build institutional & technical capacity based on capacity assessments & needs, & increase access to direct funding	Build institutional & technical capacity based on capacity assessments & needs using its SCLR and GCT approaches	Build institutional & technical capacity based on capacity assessments & needs, & increase access to funding	Build capacity in advocacy, referral process, & linkages to livelihoods based on assessment and needs	Build capacity through learning grants, capacity building workshops & peer learning via local actor cash network platform	Build capacity by supporting implementation of & reflection on GCT modalities via workshops with partners & FGDs with group cash recipients
	of	of	of	of	of	of
Partners	Slavic Heart, Poshmishka and Station Kharkiv	UEP	BCRT	Local Govt (2 regional & 5 districts) along Polish border	CTP Partner Name(s)	Relief Coordination Center
	so that	so that	so that	so that	so that	so that
Delivery	Local NGO partners can deliver MPCA to affected populations	UEP can work with communities in Ukraine near front lines or heavily impacted by displacement to ID, select, & implement 15-18 community-led intiatitves funded by GCT schemes	BCRT can cascade capacity building and mentorship 3 smaller local NGOs working in Romania border areas to support refugees through cash assistance	Local governments can support refugees through cash assistance and greater access to services	Local NGO partners can support communities with cash programming	Local NGO partners can support communities with cash programming
	in order to	in order to	in order to	in order to	in order to	in order to
Agency Learning	Understand what capacity local NGOs require, how to best build capacity in this context, & how to scale learning across StC global and country programmes	Understand what combination of grants & workshops combined with peer learning supports capacity building	Learn from testing two completely new models to find ways to adapt and scale to other humanitarian action		Understand what combination of grants & workshops combined with peer learning supports capacity building	Understand how to support national organisations to manage group cash programmes independently

Collective Learning

Action learning to inform how:
· INGOs and donors can support local leadership models for diverse local actors
· Cross-fertilisation of ideas from different agencies can support development of new partnership models
· INGOs can shift power and accountability to local actors
· To develop evidence-based localisation models that can be scaled through CCD

LOCALISATION PILOT REVIEW OF THE CCD UKRAINE REGIONAL RESPONSE CONSORTIUM

Collaborative Cash Delivery (CCD) Network