

Viet Nam Red Cross Society

Cash transfer preparedness pilot



Staff and volunteers being interviewed during the project evaluation phase.

Introduction

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), with funding from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office and Danish Red Cross, started a project to pilot an intensive capacity building approach for cash transfer programming in four National Societies¹ through a preparedness lens. The IFRC worked with the four pilot countries between May 2012 and December 2013 to enable the National Societies to use cash transfer programming to address relief needs at scale, implementing it more rapidly and targeting a larger number of households. The Viet Nam Red Cross Society was one of the four National Societies chosen for the pilot.

Acknowledging that trainings alone were not building sufficient confidence and expertise to design and implement cash programming, it was recognized that investments in preparedness and cash transfer programming capacity building required more focused resources and consistent technical support. For the four pilot countries, the project started with a preparedness workshop and/or training where the main challenges and opportunities to scaling up cash transfer programming during relief operations were explored. All four National Societies identified five key areas of preparedness: standard operating procedures (SOPs), systems and guidelines; human resource capacity

1. Chilean Red Cross, Senegalese Red Cross Society, Philippine Red Cross and Viet Nam Red Cross Society.

development; contingency planning and preparedness; operational tools and action; as well as communication and coordination. The outcomes of these workshops then formed the basis of individual work plans for each National Society highlighting their priorities. The IFRC then provided global and intermittent country level technical support as well as a start up budget

of CHF 35,000 to support the Viet Nam Red Cross Society in completing the activities outlined in their work plan.

The Viet Nam Red Cross Society was able to progress in all of the planned activities and has made considerable advances in cash transfer programming preparedness (Table 1).

Table 1. Viet Nam Red Cross Society's cash transfer programming preparedness pilot achievements

Area of preparedness	Achievements
SOPs, systems and guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed and translated cash transfer programming SOPs into Vietnamese
Human resource capacity development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and governance commitment to cash transfer programming Staff and volunteers trained through face-to-face training and/or online cash transfer programming e-learning course Participated in the National Society cash transfer programming learning workshop in Geneva (May 2013) and the IFRC/CalP global learning event on cash transfer programming preparedness in Kuala Lumpur (July 2013) National Society attended cash transfer programming training of trainers
Contingency planning and preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash transfer programming is being integrated into the National Society's contingency plan Potential third party providers explored to supplement existing cash delivery mechanisms
Operational tools and action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted market assessments Developed a cash transfer programming toolkit
Communication and coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in cash transfer programming preparedness workshop and knowledge sharing platforms with other international non-governmental organizations
Learning-by-doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relief cash transfer programming operations in 2013 (appeal code: MDRVN012)



A family who benefited from a cash grant shares their experience during an interview.

The National Society's SOPs were updated and translated to reflect the recent market assessment work it had undertaken as part of the cash transfer programming preparedness pilot. This enabled the National Society to determine standard cash transfer values based on the number of household members. This proved to be valuable in training provincial, district and commune chapters' staff and volunteers. The SOPs also contain the templates that should be used in cash transfer programming response including beneficiary communication tools that explain the process of targeting criteria and entitlements.

In response to Typhoon Wutip in 2013, the Viet Nam Red Cross Society was able to hold a one-day training for staff and volunteers on the guidelines for cash distribution procedures and utilize the SOPs during the operation. Although cash transfer programming training and advocacy took place during the preparedness pilot, the practical training of chapter level staff took place during the response operations.

"On-the-job" training was identified as being the most efficient way of testing the acquired skills.

Outcome

The Viet Nam Red Cross Society implemented their largest (in terms of the number of households receiving cash grants as a proportion of the total number of households targeted for relief) unconditional cash transfer relief programme to date in response to Typhoon Wutip by reaching 70 per cent of the total households targeted.

In addition, the Viet Nam Red Cross Society re-affirmed its commitment to cash transfer programming by using its own funds (Disaster Response Fund) in implementing the programme reaching approximately 10,000 beneficiaries. This reiterates the commitment at senior management level within the National Society to use cash transfer programming when appropriate.



Some of the families who received cash grants were visited in order to get a better understanding of the impact of the cash transfer programming,

Lessons learned

- The Viet Nam Red Cross Society's efforts in institutionalizing cash transfer programming was evident as provincial, district and commune chapters were all aware of the practices and received voluntary participation from officers across the sectors (e.g. finance, water and sanitation, disaster management).
- The "on-the-job" training demonstrated efficacy and efficiency of cash transfer programme response.



Further information can be obtained from:

Viet Nam Red Cross Society

Tel: +844 3826 3703
Fax: +844 3942 4285
Email: vnrcdq@netnam.org.vn
Web: www.redcross.org.vn

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

P.O. Box 303 CH -1211 Geneva 19 Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 730 42 22
Fax: +41 22 733 03 95

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