

Philippine Red Cross

Cash transfer preparedness pilot



Philippine Red Cross staff and volunteers responded rapidly making the Typhoon Haiyan operation the largest cash distribution carried out to date.

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 Philippine Red Cross 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 development;

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

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 20,000² to support the Philippine Red Cross in completing the activities outlined in their work plan.

The Philippine Red Cross achieved many activities against their work plan and notably accomplished the largest relief cash transfer programming to date in response to Typhoon Haiyan (Table 1).

Table 1. The Philippine Red Cross' cash transfer programming preparedness pilot achievements

Area of preparedness	Achievements
SOPs, systems and guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed cash transfer programming in emergency SOPs and guidelines Established a National Society cross-departmental cash transfer programming technical working group
Human resource capacity development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointed an operational cash focal point and assistant 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) 80 staff and volunteers trained through face-to-face training and/or online cash transfer programming e-learning course, of which 40 also received on-the-job training Provided selected chapters with telecommunication equipment
Contingency planning and preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed and approved cash transfer programming preparedness plan
Operational tools and action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified several cash transfer programming transfer mechanisms for urban, semi-urban and rural areas Signed pre-agreements with two financial institutions for activation in emergencies Developed cash transfer programming toolkit
Communication and coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-established an inter-agency Cash Working Group in the Philippines Integrated cash transfer programming learning into National Society disaster response documents
Learning-by-doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relief cash transfer programming delivered to 50,000 households

2. Lower expenditure compared to other pilots due to the 2013 typhoon operations.



The Philippine Red Cross' preparations helped to respond rapidly to the immediate humanitarian and relief needs.

The Philippine Red Cross has experience in cash transfer programming since 2009. However, the majority of their experience has been in the use of vouchers and conditional cash transfers to meet livelihoods and shelter needs. Within the pilot project period, the National Society implemented its first unconditional relief cash transfer programming in response to the 2012 Metro Manila flooding to meet the diverse relief needs of the affected population.

Since 2011, the Philippine Red Cross has established pre-agreements with two remittance companies to provide cash disbursement services, LBC Express and GCash. The experience of the cash transfer programming response at scale has provided substantial learning about working with service providers which has resulted in adjustments to the pre-agreements.

In addition to staff and volunteers trained through the cash transfer programming preparedness pilot, the Philippine Red Cross developed a more comprehensive set of SOPs by adapting their pre-existing ones based on recovery programming. Based on the SOPs, the National Society was able to provide a one-day training to a large group of staff and volunteers prior to the cash transfer programming response to Typhoon Haiyan. This helped the National Society to rapidly respond to the immediate humanitarian and relief needs of the affected population, making it the largest cash distribution carried out to date. Due in part to the preparedness work of the Philippine Red Cross and the IFRC, 50,000 households were able to receive unconditional cash grants within four months of the operation.



Trained Philippine Red Cross volunteers conduct an exit interview at the distribution site.

Outcome

The Philippine Red Cross has demonstrated the capacity to deliver unconditional cash grants at scale and with speed. Though this was achieved with international support, this distribution would not have been possible without the commitment from the National Society's leadership, existing SOPs and pre-agreements with the service providers.

Lessons learned

- Monitoring tools including exit interviews and post distribution monitoring enabled a better understanding of the perceptions of beneficiaries regarding the distribution process and how the cash grants were being used.
- Nominating a cash focal point was important in order to institutionalize the role within the National Society and to allocate the appropriate time and resources to support it.
- Pre-existing agreements with more than one service provider enabled the National Society to disburse at an unprecedented scale.



Further information can be obtained from:

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