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# CashCap

Case Study: Cash Response Team

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The speed at which cash assistance has grown, in addition to the unresolved challenge of cash coordination mean there is more demand than there is the availability of experts with the right combination of technical and soft skills. CashCap, a NORCAP-based inter-agency service, fills that gap. Experts from its pool have been providing the humanitarian and development community with technical, coordination and capacity development support across all stages of a cash response for over six years.

A key part of what helps CashCapers be effective in their missions is through the support from their peers in the Cash Response Team (CRT) – on standby to help deployed experts stay independent, impartial and equipped with the best guidance on their mission. Globally positioned, the Cash Response Team was created to:

- Foster exchange and knowledge dissemination
- Support CashCap experts deployed on their mission
- Provide regional and global actors with senior cash expertise
- Provide surge deployment for rapid onset crises or capacity gaps

## Fostering exchange and knowledge dissemination

If a deployed expert has a technical problem they don't know how to solve, they can reach out to the Cash Response Team to find out for them. If there isn't existing guidance, they will develop some from their extensive knowledge and experience. Each member of the Cash Response Team is supported to develop an area of expertise that is a critical piece in the cash puzzle. For example, if an expert is tasked with coordinating a National Minimum Expenditure Basket, a Cash Response Team member who has this specialism can train the expert and bring in the best practice from other missions.



**“No expert can be an expert on everything they are asked to do. The CRT helps link experts to what is needed or going onto the ground to help.” 2018 review of the Cash Response Team.**

“This peer support network is one of the things that makes CashCap unique”, agrees Ali Mansoor, a CashCap expert deployed to South Sudan, who has been supported by the CRT team: “We have professionals around the globe to help, connection to all the Clusters, the ability to approach the global nutrition expert to give a session on cash and voucher assistance and nutrition to the South Sudan Cash Working Group. Importantly, we get the right and timely information due to our connections,” says Ali.

### Supporting CashCappers on mission

CashCap’s experts pledge to always keep the priorities of every actor in a cash working group in mind – an activity that demands a great deal of diplomacy. CashCap experts are deployed to support missions for 6-12 months, so having a CRT member provide an outsider perspective and provide advice can be crucial to delivering a joint decision that benefits all actors.

In early 2021, cash expert Ali was deployed to South Sudan to help develop the Cash Working Group’s 2021-22 strategy. Since 2018, CashCap experts have helped to grow the country’s Cash Working Group into a successful network of 210 actors from the UN, international and national humanitarian, development organisations, government and private sector. It went from struggling to have an impact to becoming one of the most important groups in humanitarian architecture - a gold standard for Cash Working Groups worldwide. But with such a large group, voices can sometimes get lost amongst the noise - particularly those of national actors.

To make sure the Cash Working Group’s 2021-2022 strategy was inclusive of these voices, Ali called in Marga Ledo, a member of the Cash Response Team, for backup. Marga’s global overview and independence from the mission meant she was able to ensure everyone’s perspective and goals were included: “We conducted interviews and focus group discussions with everyone, including the



*Former CashCap Cash Response Team member Jimena Peroni Galli supporting the cash expert in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. CashCap experts can become members of the Cash Response Team, as well as stepping back into a mission-specific role*

national NGOs, and the local actors were really pleased to be actively engaged in the process,” says Marga. “They were able to discuss and share ideas on how we could support localisation commitments and the national actors’ agendas. They felt their voices were being heard.”

And it’s not only talk - the Cash Response Team doesn’t fly in for the day and leave. Meaningful engagement was one of the key asks of national actors, so Marga continues to join meetings at key times to make sure there is space in the discussions for them to say their part and engage in decision making. “Sometimes internationals might overpower a discussion. The in-country expert’s job is to remain impartial, so they might not be able to insist on the opinions of the national NGOs. As I am removed and independent, I can step in when requested by the expert and support to make sure their opinions count too.”



Cash Response Team Member Ricardo Lobo speaks to World Food Programme colleagues while supporting cash and voucher assistance programming in Mozambique following Cyclone Idai. Photo: NORCAP/Ida Lomholt

**“The Cash Response Team expert was supported in preparing the mission strategy to reach outputs, engage with relevant partners and provide effective and practical CashCap briefing. A second virtual mission facilitated the ToR for extension and identified recommendations for the following phase of the mission, including discussions with all relevant partners.” CashCap expert in the 2021 CRT review report**

### **Provide regional and global actors with senior cash expertise**

Like many of our experts, Marga has extensive expertise working in humanitarian cash and markets prior to joining CashCap. She brings to the team years of strategic and operational humanitarian cash experience at the country and global level. She has worked in a range of cash and non-cash roles with a wide range of stakeholders including the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, INGOs, UN agencies and ACAPS, including global roles such as global cash lead for IFRC. Prior to joining the Country Response Team, Marga was deployed as a CashCap expert to different countries so is familiar with the challenges and opportunities experts might face.

“In the field, you need strong technical and analytical capacities, but social and diplomatic skills are also key as you need to influence and persuade people to support the common objectives of the Cash Working

Group or initiative; and focus on the best interests of crisis-affected populations.”

With their experience and skills, as well as global oversight across many crises, Cash Response Team members are well-positioned to feed into global

coordination mechanisms and initiatives. They are active members of the [Grand Bargain cash workstream Linking Humanitarian Cash with Social Protection sub-group](#), as well as involved in discussions and consultations about the future of the Grand Bargain, exchanges about humanitarian reform, and how to solve the challenges of cash coordination.

### Provide surge deployment

Despite her self declared “commitment phobia,” Marga has been on the reputable Cash Response Team since 2019 – a long run in her eyes. She loves the role’s flexibility, variety of what she does, the working atmosphere and colleagues. “Being a CRT member enables me to get involved in different discussions and initiatives at the global, regional and country level, including those related to new ways of working and disrupting the humanitarian system.”

As full-time staff, Cash Response Team members are readily available to quickly scale up support for cash and voucher assistance where needed. This is especially crucial for a response to a rapid-onset disaster, or if there is a critical capacity gap supporting a Cash Working Group. “I like working at the global level, but also enjoy the opportunity to work in the field as this always gives me a reality check on how best to support making global commitments a reality and then to bring this experience to the global level,” she says. Recently Marga was deployed to Syria to support the Damascus Cash Working Group when there was a capacity gap. “For me this is an added value of the role, to be deployed to cover gaps or sudden-onset disasters.”

“CashCap provides a certain degree of flexibility for CRT members to accommodate our personal interests, preferences and personal circumstances. For example, some people in the CRT prefer less unexpected travel, while others, like me, prefer travelling at short notice.”



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CashCap Cash Response Team member expert Ricardo Lobo with colleague Apolonia Morhaim from the Food Security Cluster at a Cash Working Group meeting in Beira, Mozambique. Photo: NORCAP/ Ida Lomholt.



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