

# LOCALISATION CASE STUDIES

Case studies prepared by national and international organisations to share their experiences of consciously promoting locally led humanitarian action through equitable partnerships. These case studies were prepared as part of efforts to raise awareness of [DG ECHO's localisation guidance note](#) published in March 2023. The examples shared in these case studies are funded by a range of different donors.

## IFRC: National Society Development, a mutual capacity strengthening approach

This case study presents IFRC's approach to supporting capacity strengthening of its membership. Through tailor-made investments, National Societies are better able to bolster community resilience, deliver emergency responses and ensure efficient systems and accountability, while focus on improving governance and leadership helps strengthen organisational culture and integrity. An example of peer to peer learning between two National Societies (the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the Kenyan Red Cross) supported by a third (German Red Cross) is focused on in this study.

### Background



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is a unique global network of 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with sixteen million volunteers organised in 197,000 local units or branches worldwide. With the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), it composes the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement). Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, while adhering to the Fundamental Principles at all times, have a unique auxiliary role<sup>2</sup> towards the public authorities in the humanitarian field and support their communities in preparing for and responding to disasters and conflicts, as well as in building resilience. This local action – supported by global solidarity as and when needed – is geared towards increasing the trust of communities, partners and donors in the integrity, transparency, and principled approach of National Societies. One of the network's biggest priorities is to improve the ability of all National Societies to support communities in situations of vulnerability in all contexts through National Society Development (NSD).

### What does National Society Development (NSD) involve?

To maintain and enhance the unique auxiliary role of National Societies, NSD aims to reinforce their legal basis and strengthen their local credibility. It ensures tailor-made investments to

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<sup>1</sup> DG ECHO's guidance note [Promoting Equitable Partnerships with Local Responders in Humanitarian Settings](#), March 2023

<sup>2</sup> Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are neither governmental institutions nor wholly separate non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Their relationship to the authorities in their country is defined by their role as "auxiliaries" and by the [Fundamental Principles](#) of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, including neutrality, impartiality and independence. See more details here: [Auxiliary role | IFRC](#)

strengthen the capacities of National Societies to bolster community resilience, deliver emergency responses, and ensure efficient systems and accountability. By improving their governance and leadership, National Societies strengthen their organisational culture and integrity (e.g. mandate and strategy, auxiliary role, territorial structure, relations with the wider network, etc.)<sup>3</sup>. Support is also provided to all the core functions needed to work in an effective and accountable way.

National Societies are assisted to assess their own performance, capacity and development needs through the [organisational capacity assessment and certification \(OCAC\) tool](#) – a “general health check” that can be used to make sure they are meeting minimum standards and to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This tool informs the types of support the IFRC and partner National Societies can provide to strengthen the National Society's core capacities (e.g. financial sustainability, or key systems such as HR, IT, finance, logistics, communication, etc.). Furthermore, National Societies support each other in the design and delivery of sectoral long-term programmes and services in both emergency and non-emergency settings (e.g. health, WASH, disaster management, migration, climate action, etc.) that help the people who are most at risk within their communities.

## What does NSD look like in practice?

In summary, NSD revolves around three components:

1. The first is [Get the Foundations Right](#), whereby National Societies are supported in improving their governance and leadership, which, in turn, helps to improve organisational culture and integrity.
2. The second is [Build Core Competencies](#) that are needed to work in an effective and accountable way (HR, IT, Logistics, Volunteer Management, etc).
3. The third is [Programmes and Services](#) (Health, Disaster Management, Migration, etc.) designed to deliver long-term programmes that help the most vulnerable people in their communities.

The following concrete example highlights a successful approach to NSD under the component 2) Build Core Competencies; in this particular case with regards to key logistics and IT systems of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). This example could serve as inspiration to others to better recognise Local and National Actors (L/NAs) value and skills and support (institutional) capacities.



[Red Cross/Red Crescent staff forming part of the tripartite agreement, discussing added value of enhanced fleet management tools for an effective and self-sustaining logistics model](#)

<sup>3</sup> More information can be found in the [guidance for National Society statutes](#)

## Transforming institutional support services in humanitarian assistance to a self-sustainable model

Logistics is one of the core support services that constitute the backbone for every humanitarian assistance operation. In Syria, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) plays a key role in supporting humanitarian operations. Besides coordinating their operation, they are among the leading actors to reach millions of emergency affected people in the country. The German Red Cross (GRC) supports SARC in enhancing their capacities with a focus on logistics. Since 2022, this support has transitioned into developing a self-sustaining logistics unit and establishing a cost recovery mechanism to enable SARC to run its services in a sustainable manner, independent of international funding by the end of 2025. This includes strengthening institutional procedures, policies, and the operational framework for increased functionality, specifically in warehousing and fleet management, as well as integrating efficient IT, finance and standard operating procedures.

To build on best practices within the IFRC network, an exchange programme between the two National Societies Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the Kenyan Red Cross was established. The Kenyan Red Cross has proven experience in humanitarian logistics and cost recovery mechanisms, as they have introduced a service fee to internal programmes and other humanitarian actors who rely on their supply chain services. The tripartite partnership between SARC, GRC and the Kenyan Red Cross promotes peer-to-peer knowledge and expertise sharing across the IFRC network and provides opportunities to discuss, share, evaluate and support the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in adopting and implementing a cost recovery programme that benefits people in need in Syria through strengthened capacity among staff/volunteers and enhanced responsiveness.

### Learning recommendations:

- When supporting capacity strengthening measures, it's important to focus on policies and procedures as well staff/volunteer training. In this programme, learning from the peer exchange, the National Society Syrian Arab Red Crescent was supported in developing a robust set of operational procedures. This underpinned its capacity for rapid scale-up and

“The German Red Cross has offered to support the twinning programme; this is a great opportunity to witness universality at work... we have all learnt that the challenges presented by cost recovery, logistics and warehousing are universal in nature. I am grateful as an IT specialist that the solutions we have implemented at Kenya Red Cross are applicable to the challenges faced by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and can be emulated by other national societies....” *Robert Kanake, ICT officer, Applications, Kenya Red Cross*

“Thanks to the wealth of knowledge and experience gained through the twinning and knowledge sharing programme with KRC, guided and supported by GRC, SARC is aiming to completely fund its logistics operation via an established cost-recovery mechanism by end of 2025...” *AbdulAziz Al Kharat, Director of Logistics, Syrian Arab Red Crescent*

scale-down as needed to respond to the humanitarian context, independent of international assistance.

- Engaging in peer-to-peer learning will generate holistic knowledge development, beyond its own organisational particularities, allowing for objective outcomes and expertise sharing within partners. Peer-to-peer learning creates ownership and boosts creativity by blending two different context realities, as well as developing problem-solving skills.
- Given the complexity and technical in-depth expertise required for this type of programme, cases of HR turnover are particularly disadvantageous. It is crucial to document all steps taken and create an understanding of the efforts at all levels (management and technical) of the organisations involved to mitigate the risks related to staff leaving during the yearlong programme.

“GRC was keen to enable SARC, in relying on its own donor-independent structures and capacities, to implement a more sustainable and locally-led approach to its operation. Therefore GRC supported the Logistics Unit on applying the cost-recovery model and facilitated a peer-to-peer knowledge sharing partnership with a National Society who could share their experience from a similar set of requirements, the Kenyan RC...”. *Allan Masavah, GRC Logistics Coordinator in Syria*

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