

# 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.

## The Code of Good Partnership: the experience of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

This case study shares different models of equitable partnership adopted by National Societies from the Global South and Global North that choose to work together. Three different approaches are presented, ways to stop local and national actors being treated as implementers/sub-contractors and to ensure that they are fully included in strategic and decision-making processes.



### 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). 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. Partnership is inherent to the Movement, where many programmes are designed and implemented through joint efforts of multiple National Societies and/or the IFRC or the ICRC. Significant progress has been made in concretising what partnership, internal and external to the Movement implies in practice, concluding with the adoption of the [Code for Good Partnership](#) by the 2009 General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

### What does equitable partnership involve?

Local and National Actors (L/NAs) are often treated as implementers/sub-contractors and not fully included in strategic and decision-making processes. Partnership is at the core of the Movement's functioning, recognising National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as key decision-makers in the humanitarian field. The Movement commits to take into account the specific mandates and nature of National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC, by deploying a set of commitments and minimum standards of respectful behaviour in partnerships as represented

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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 organizations (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](#)

in the Code of Good Partnership, building on the [Fundamental Principles](#), as well as the [Statutes of the Movement](#) and its policy framework. In the spirit of mutual respect, Movement components apply the Code for Good Partnership to all their partnerships to realise a common goal. It is recognised that more can be achieved by combining different capacities and having shared and individual responsibilities.

## What does equitable partnership look like in practice?

The following concrete examples provide successful approaches to equitable partnership which could function as an inspiration to others.

### *Delegated Management*

The Belgian Red Cross' approach to equitable partnership with its partner National Societies, whatever their level or capacity, is founded on delegated management. Currently, the Belgian Red Cross supports the Burkinabe Red Cross, the Burundi Red Cross, the Mali Red Cross, the Niger Red Cross, the Democratic Republic of Congo Red Cross, the Rwanda Red Cross and the Senegalese Red Cross in this way. The prerequisites are the good governance of the National Society and mutual trust. The challenge lies in adapting support and projects to the capacities of the National Society and not the other way around, whilst clearly defining roles and responsibilities in the project's management, along with mitigating the financial and operational risks. The permanent presence of a Belgian Red Cross Country Representative working alongside the National Society facilitates the approach, helping foster mutual understanding of the issues at stake. Furthermore, close coordination between the Belgian Red Cross and its partners is key to avoid any negative impact on the development of the National Society. Building on its experience, the Belgian Red Cross has drawn up a "Delegated Management Guide", which clarifies respective roles and responsibilities at every stage of the project cycle. Special attention is paid to avoiding direct management reflexes and to the attitude adopted by Belgian Red Cross staff in the partnership.

Delegated management encourages alignment with partners' strategies and supports activities they consider as priorities, having a positive impact on the relationship and the partner's involvement. The guide offers a modular framework depending on the partner's expectations, capacities, specificities, and choices. Thanks to the delegated management approach, National Societies in the countries have become stronger and are now able to comply with the procedures of more demanding donors and to absorb substantial amounts of funding. The delegated management approach has strengthened practices, leading to National Societies becoming key actors in the delivery of humanitarian aid in their countries. Delegated management is about enabling the local National Society partner to conduct its activities as lightly as possible in terms of administrative and financial obligations, allowing the prioritisation of the delivery of quality interventions.

### *Partnership Review Talks*

Building on existing partnerships, the Danish Red Cross launched its partnership modality in 2010 to ensure strong two-way partnerships. This is pivotal to achieving the best results whilst ensuring support of local priorities and providing the appropriate assistance requested. The Danish Red Cross defines nine essential partnership values: ownership, flexibility, trust and honest dialogue, respect, access to each other, transparency, accountability, equality, and

mutual understanding. These values inform the partnership dialogue that leads to developing a long-term partnership with shared values and objectives. In support of integrating and strengthening the nine partnership values, the Danish Red Cross regularly holds Partnership Review Talks (PRT) with its partner National Societies. A PRT is a forum concerned purely with enabling communication between partners, aimed at building on partner strengths as well as addressing concerns and deepening the partnership. The PRT is a process based on equity and respect, allowing leadership and senior management from the Danish Red Cross and its partner National Society to talk meaningfully, honestly, and openly about existing cooperation and the various partnership attributes that are essential for working effectively.

The Partnership Review Talk organised with the South Sudan Red Cross in 2022 is a recent example; it focused on two key questions – one for each partner:

- *The question for the South Sudan Red Cross was: does the Danish Red Cross enable and create the circumstances for the South Sudan Red Cross to have a high level of ownership?*
- *The question for the Danish Red Cross was: does the South Sudan Red Cross take the opportunities that are presented to take full ownership of the programme?*

Through the nine partnership values, the talk answered the above questions while diving into other topics, through an open and honest dialogue. Management staff on both sides attended the event held in Juba, South Sudan, and facilitated presentations of partnership limitations and subsequent actions on both sides. The jointly agreed action plan recognises that the overall responsibility for follow-up lies with the South Sudan Red Cross Society, with the support of the Danish Red Cross upon request, and that regular partner communication is initiated to illustrate progress. Having a platform promoting trust and honest dialogue has strengthened the partnership and allowed both partners to reflect and adjust to fulfil common objectives. The PRT can be a useful tool to continue to nurture the partnership, including trust, flexibility, ownership etc.

### *The Measurable Partnership Chart (MPC)*

The 8 National Societies (8NS) Africa Initiative, which brings together the Mozambique Red Cross, the Red Cross of Côte d'Ivoire, the Liberian Red Cross, the Sierra Leone Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, the British Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross was initiated in 2008. Through increasing its members' capacities and competencies in order to make a positive contribution towards improving the living conditions of people and communities in situations of vulnerability, the initiative: increases sustainability; decreases dependency; improves coordination and ensures that organisational learning and reflection is shared and put into practice. To strengthen cooperation, the Measurable Partnership Chart (MPC) was developed which enables partners to 'measure' (assess) and discuss the quality of their partnership, with a focus on capacities, progress, performance, and joint learning. It allows participants to build understanding of the complex issues involved in a partnership, determine strengths and weaknesses based on performance, and recommends ways forward in the form of an action plan. The tool is comprehensively structured along four key principles of cooperation considered important for partnerships within the framework: 1) relevance (linked to the intentions and motives of a partnership); 2) equality, respect and integrity (linked to the behaviour of partners); 3) mutually achieving expectations (linked to the actual practice of collaboration/implementation of activities as planned in the partnership), and 4) transparency

and accountability (linked to information sharing/availability). Ethics, planning and enabling factors (e.g. resources needed, capacity building) are cross-cutting variables. For each of the principles, several indicators have been formulated in the form of a statement that is given a value reflecting the importance of the indicator, as well as a score for the actual extent of practice within the partnership. The scores are used to open up discussions, for organisational learning and to implement and monitor improvement (through a recommendations/action plan).

## Lessons learned & recommendations:

- Joint assessment of the partnership is an assessment of the *partnership*, not an assessment of the partner.
- It is important that joint assessment of partnership remains guided by an institutional and not individual perspective.
- Joint assessment of the partnership must be concentrated on concrete elements. It is therefore relevant to gather examples – explaining the positive or negative ratings assigned to each criterion – from the collaborators who work with the partner and who will not be able to take part in the partnership assessment meeting.
- Joint assessment of the partnership meetings end with the identification of an action plan and priorities to improve the relationship. It is imperative to follow up on these recommendations, and to assign tasks to members of staff who oversee this follow-up.
- To start a new joint assessment of the partnership, it is key to look back at the previous evaluation process which should always be an opportunity to celebrate achievements but also to challenge items that systematically emerge from this evaluation process.
- When running this process for the first time the support of an external consultant is key to free up time for employees who will be involved in the joint assessment of the partnership and to commit the hierarchy of both partners to the process.

Case study prepared by IFRC

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