

# Towards co-ownership: role of intermediaries in supporting locally-led humanitarian action

## IFRC Commitments

As a global network supported by a Secretariat to its 192 members, the IFRC is focused on the twin goals of (1) supporting and empowering the humanitarian action of its members, working through volunteers in their own communities and (2) promoting global solidarity, when required, between its members to address overwhelming humanitarian needs. These goals usually work very well together, but there can also be tensions between them, as debates around the Grand Bargain have made clear. As a global network supported by its Secretariat, therefore, the IFRC can and will continue to strengthen its approach to localisation.

Our commitments will build on some important recent strategy and policy reforms. In 2019, the IFRC network adopted “Strategy 2030,” a ten-year transformative agenda for our network. **The Strategy calls for an “urgent shift of leadership and decision-making to the most local level” including a greater focus on the development of National Societies, particularly at the branch level, ensuring services are led and developed by local actors, underpinned by ethical practices and supported by their strong auxiliary role.**

To implement the Strategy 2030, the IFRC Secretariat developed the Agenda for Renewal that provides for more focus on delivering on its core mandate: 1) Coordination across member National Societies, ensuring an IFRC-wide-approach, 2) Representation of the membership internationally and regionally including through joint humanitarian diplomacy and 3) National Society development. **The Secretariat to also focus on providing strategic analysis, information management, quality assurance, and on strengthening Federation-wide accountability, performance, risk management and transparency.**

Building on these bases, the IFRC commits to the following steps to improve the way that its intermediary role will empower locally-led humanitarian action in our network:

1. On transparency of funding and budgets
  - **Ensure that all funding passed through the IFRC to National Societies provides them at least as much overhead/indirect costs as the IFRC itself retains.**
  - Replicating and or scaling up good practices around co-designing and shared decision making, such as from the new ECHO Pilot Programmatic Partnership. For example, for the ECHO Pilot Programmatic Partnership, the IFRC Secretariat developed a new overhead structure limited to 2.5% with most of the overheads going to implementing National Societies.
  - **Expand membership of the DREF Advisory Group to representatives from major DREF recipient National Societies.** In addition, a second and new advisory group, the DREF Council, will be established comprised of representatives of donor governments and corresponding National Society leadership.
  - Through the “Working with Programme Partners” process, **sign new framework partnership agreements with all National Societies receiving IFRC pass-through funds including bespoke risk management provisions** based on their specific context, with an aim to ensuring the most equitable and flexible terms feasible
  
2. On transparency and accountability

- **Strengthening systems and mechanisms in place for regular review, feedback and reporting by National Societies at strategic level** – General Assembly, Council of Delegates, SMCC, etc – **and at operational level** – programme evaluations and research that addresses concerns raised.
3. On quality and quantity of funding
    - IFRC is committed to a **reform process to change both its operating and financing models to enable IFRC to pass down increased quality and quantity of funding to National Societies** through global thematic platforms rather than small scale programming.
    - To do this, the IFRC will capitalize upon its International Organisation status to access resources on behalf of its membership that they do not have direct access to. IFRC's Global Programme for migration for example is exclusively **focused on fundraising for National Societies**, rather than for the IFRC Secretariat.
  4. On default to local
    - **Institute a “one country plan” process in every country** where members of the IFRC network are active to ensure that all efforts are in support of the Host National Society's strategic objectives and needs.
    - The IFRC Secretariat is increasingly moving away from direct implementation and focusing instead on supporting National Societies to implement.
  5. On institutional capacity strengthening
    - Use the IFRC Capacity Building Fund to channel savings of CHF 15 million for institutional capacity development of National Societies. This further compliments investments through the National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA).
    - Develop a Federation-wide risk register for information sharing between RCRC stakeholders in operations.
    - Roll out new Branch Development Framework Guidance, the “V-community” (a virtual mobile based platform to connect volunteers across the globe), a Branch Development Portal and Action Learning pro-bono coaching.
  6. On Governance:
    - Maintain an inclusive approach to the governance of IFRC which is elected from and by 192 National Societies. As of June 2022, now has a female majority for the first time in 100 years.
    - Ensure the ongoing inclusive development of policies and strategies with National Societies and for National Societies.