



**Real-Time Response Review
of the
Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal 2022
for
Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)**

Poland Country Report
Submitted 07 February 2023

Conflict Management Consulting (CMC)
Brussels, Belgium
info@cmc-consult.eu

Abuja | Abidjan | Amman | Brussels | Copenhagen | Islamabad | Istanbul | Munich | Yangon | Washington DC

Contents

Acronyms	i
Acknowledgments	i
1. Executive Summary	1
2. Introduction and Background	2
2.1. The review and this report	2
2.2. Background and context.....	3
3. Who we heard from	4
4. Findings	5
4.1. CHS1: Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant	5
4.2. CHS 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely	5
4.3. CHS 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.	7
4.4. CHS 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation, and feedback	7
4.5. CHS 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed	8
4.6. CHS 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary	8
4.7. CHS 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve	9
4.8. CHS 8: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably	10
4.9. CHS 9: Resources are managed effectively, efficiently, and ethically	10
5. Conclusions	10
6. Recommendations	12
Annexes	14
7. Overview of DEC Response	14
8. Purpose and Scope of Review	15
8.1. Purpose.....	15
8.2. Scope and limitations	15
9. Review Concepts and Approach	16
9.1. Concepts	16
9.2. Approach and priorities.....	17
10. Review Methodology and Deliverables	18
10.1. Methodology	18
10.2. Deliverables	20
11. Reflections from the Real-Time Review (RTR)	20
11.1. Using the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS).....	20
11.2. Learning about learning.....	21
11.3. Real-Time Review (RTR) Process	23

Acronyms

CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
CMC	Conflict Management Consulting
CSO	Civic Society Organisations
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
KID	Key Informant Discussions
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MPC	Multi-Purpose Cash
NFI	Non-Food Items
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PSEA	Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSHEA	Protection against Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse
RTR	Real-Time Review
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UHA	Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Acknowledgments

The CMC team would like to acknowledge the following:

- All respondents, for their time and constructive inputs to the Review.
- The DEC Members and their staff who supported the Review.
- The DEC Secretariat, for their patience and support throughout the Review process.
- The Host DEC Member in Poland: CMC expresses its gratitude to IFRC for its friendly and professional hosting of the Review field mission in Poland, providing premises, transport, and other administrative support without which the review would not have been possible.
- The people of Ukraine for their resilience and courage in this crisis.
- The host communities in Poland and neighbouring countries, and all others who support people in need.

1. Executive Summary

Since 24 February 2022, the conflict in Ukraine has led to a major humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in need, including those who have fled across borders, those who are displaced inside the country and those unable or unwilling to leave conflict-affected areas. On 3 March 2022, DEC launched the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal (UHA), which has raised £400 million to date, of which £215 million was allocated in Phase 1 and £86 million spent. 13 Member Charities responded as part of the DEC appeal, working with partners in Ukraine and four neighbouring countries: Poland, Romania, Moldova, and Hungary.

As part of its commitment to accountability and learning, the DEC commissioned this Real-Time Response Review, its aim being '*to instigate collective real-time reflection and learning to inform adjustments across DEC Members' responses.*' It draws on the experience of initial phase of the response to help formulate lessons to be applied in real-time and to the second phase of the response. The approach of the Review was to support real-time learning as part of the Review process and to further support this and future learning with reports and inputs to workshops. In line with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), which is itself at the centre of the DEC's Learning and Accountability Framework, the Review was centred on affected people. In execution, it was rapid and light in touch, and used participatory and qualitative methods. It sought to hear from all the main stakeholders (affected people, aid workers, local organisations, DEC Members, and others), to reflect and report on what was heard and from this to draw conclusions and propose recommendations. In doing so, it used the 9 commitments of the CHS as the main framework for the discussions (further details in *Annex*).

CHS1 - Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant: Overall, the response proved to be relevant to the affected people and was delivered in line with the strategies of individual DEC Members and adapted to meet the evolving context and needs. All DEC Members work with local partners and the majority are on track to deliver expected results, despite some delays and challenges faced at the beginning of the crisis. A key challenge was on coordination with the Polish Government.

CHS 2 - Humanitarian response is effective and timely: As most DEC Members were not present in the country, the initial response had some delays, despite deploying staff from different countries to the response in Poland. Challenges contributing to the delay related to administrative and procurement processes. During the first phase, DEC Members delivered programmes related to cash, protection, food, WASH, shelter, and education. Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) was the most common support modality, and was seen to be very effective, as Poland is a developed country with functional market systems and because this modality was well suited to the situation of refugees. Due to likely changes in the context in both Poland and Ukraine, there is a need for contingency planning, preparedness, and flexibility.

CHS 3 - Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects: All DEC Members delivered most of their programming through local partners, following their internal processes and due diligence to select local partners and ensure effective delivery of the activities. DEC Members provided capacity strengthening to their local partners to enhance their capability to effectively deliver the response; this was greatly appreciated by local partners. There was little opportunity to work with national Government, given their lack of collaboration with NGOs and INGOs.

CHS 4 - Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation, and feedback: The communication with affected people was through social media and QR codes, posters, and local partners. The Review found that there is a need to improve communications about the work of the DEC Members and their partners to ensure that affected people and host communities are well informed about their entitlements and rights and to avoid potential conflict that could emerge between refugees from Ukraine and host communities.

CHS 5 - Complaints are welcomed and addressed: Mechanisms to support effective complaint and feedback mechanism are in place at DEC Members level, but more effort is needed to ensure stronger Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) systems are adopted and implemented by local partners / implementers.

CHS 6 - Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary: While several coordination platforms are used by the DEC Members in the country (e.g., the Cash Working Group), the coordination and collaborative learning between DEC Members is limited and would benefit from simple measures. Coordination amongst Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) is weak; this is recognised by local partners and CSOs, and efforts are needed and being made to address this.

CHS 7 - Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve: A good commitment to learning has been observed among all DEC Members and their partners, but there is scope to enhance this learning, especially between DEC Members. Some challenges have been identified related to the low capacity of some local partners in terms of Monitoring and Evaluations (M&Es), with variations between organisations. There is a need for research that should be done by DEC Members at country level to provide better information on changing context, emerging needs, priorities, and provision by Government. This will support the design or more tailored programming able to answer affected people's changing needs and avoid duplication.

CHS 8 - Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably: On this, the responses varied between staff members of DEC Members. Some of the more established reported that the work environment is flexible, and they work together to respond in the best way possible. Many staff members reported that they suffered from a lack of proper orientation and handover when they joined the organisation in Poland, resulting in duplication and some problems with local partners. The DEC Members were proactive in providing support and training to staff.

CH 9 - Resources are managed effectively, efficiently, and ethically: While a detailed assessment of this criteria was beyond the scope of the Review, it was noted that DEC Members have strong track records in delivering humanitarian response in different contexts, are committed to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and promote engagement with and participation by affected people in different phases of their programming. The DEC Members have processes in place for document control, procurement, suppliers, supervised distribution of supplies, and other governance and financial systems that were used during the first phase and set up of the operation in Poland. Such practices are a good indication that this commitment is being met.

Summary of conclusions: The conclusion of the Review is that after some understandable delays, the response of DEC Members in Poland was good and provided much needed support. The DEC Members work well with local partners and the flexibility of DEC funding is much valued. There is scope to improve the assessment of changing needs and to improve coordination between CSOs. A key challenge is the relationship with the national Government. The response in Poland would benefit from more communication and sharing of learning between DEC Members and there is a need to be prepared for significant changes in the context, both in Poland and in Ukraine.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1. The review and this report

This is the Country Report for Poland of the Real-Time Review (RTR) of the response funded by the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal (UHA). It follows the Aides Mémoire, draft country reports and a draft of the synthesis report, taking on board comments received and recent discussions, such as the learning workshops of 4 November and 9 December 2022. This report complements the Country Reports for Ukraine, Romania, Moldova, Hungary and the Synthesis Report.

The primary purpose of the RTR is to *instigate collective real-time reflection and learning to inform adjustments across DEC Members' responses*. The Review draws on the experiences in the initial phase of the response in order that lessons be applied in real-time and into the second phase of the Members' programmes. Recognising the lead role played by national and local actors in the crisis response to date, and the DEC's own commitments to strengthen localisation efforts, attention to how DEC Members are establishing and scaling up their responses in ways that are complementary to and reinforcing of local humanitarian action was an important part of the

picture. The RTR serves an accountability function, both to communities and people affected by crisis¹, as well as to the UK public and other key supporters of the DEC appeal. Complementing this Review, a third party monitoring process is ongoing in Ukraine, being conducted on behalf of the FCDO of the UK.

The Review covered the humanitarian response in 5 countries, conducted by 13 Members and supported by the DEC Secretariat, and involved discussions with a wide range of stakeholders. The Review focused on 'collective learning' and did not conduct in-depth reviews on the responses of individual DEC Members.

The review was designed as a participatory process, whereby collective learning was facilitated during the course of the review, notably in the use of workshops and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), both in-country and across the whole of the response. This report is the final stage of this process.

Further details on the review purpose, approach and methodology are given in the *Annex*.

2.2. Background and context

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) brings together 15 of the UK's leading aid charities to raise funds in response to major international humanitarian crises. In order to support Members' activities, harness lessons and inform real-time revisions to ongoing humanitarian programmes, the DEC Secretariat commissioned this Review of programmes funded by the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal (UHA).

Since 24 February 2022, the conflict in Ukraine has escalated and led to a massive humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in need, including those who have fled across borders and many more who are on the move inside the country or unable to leave encircled towns and cities. Currently over 5.6 million people are displaced internally and more than 7.8 million refugees from Ukraine have fled to European countries².

The majority of those fleeing Ukraine are women and children. Over 4.3 million refugees from Ukraine have registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in different European countries³, out of which around 1.5 million are registered in Poland⁴.

The Ukraine crisis has triggered exceptional levels of support and solidarity. Neighbouring Governments have mobilised quickly, as have local communities in those countries. In contrast with their approach to refugees from other conflicts, EU countries have been fast to provide temporary protection and access to jobs and services to Ukrainians. The UN humanitarian flash appeal for Ukraine is one of the biggest and most generously funded ever⁵. Public appeals in many European countries have also been very well supported.

As part of this support, the DEC launched the UHA on 3 March 2022. 13 Member Charities⁶ have responded as part of the DEC appeal, working with partners in Ukraine and 4 neighbouring countries: Poland, Romania, Moldova and Hungary, and providing cross-border support from Romania and Slovakia.

At the time of writing, the DEC fundraising campaign has raised over £400 million. The 13 Member charities taking part in the appeal will spend DEC funds over a period of at least 3 years, split into Phase 1 (the first 6

¹ In line with CHS commitment 7 "humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve".

² <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ukraine/>

³ Ukraine Situation Flash Update #33 (21 October 2022).

⁴ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10781?secret=unhcrrestricted>

⁵ https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/Navigating_Ukrainian_dilemmas_in_the_Ukraine_crisis.pdf

⁶ Action Against Hunger, ActionAid, Age International, British Red Cross, CAFOD, Care, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, International Rescue Committee, Oxfam, Plan International, Save the Children and World Vision. Islamic Relief Worldwide and Tearfund will respond at a smaller scale with their own funds but will participate in DEC MEAL activities.

months) and Phase 2 (the following 30 months) of the response. During Phase 1 £215 million was allocated to DEC Members to support humanitarian programmes.

The response priorities for DEC Members and their partners in Phase 1 were:

- Health: provision of primary healthcare services, providing items like trauma kits and first aid kits, as well as supporting healthcare facilities with oxygen compressors and vital pharmaceutical products.
- Cash: support affected populations needs (Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees, as well as members of the host communities) through Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) delivered using a variety of approaches: pre-paid cards, digital transfers etc to meet vital basic needs and protection services.
- Food: food assistance, hot meals or using cash transfers like supermarket vouchers.
- Water, sanitation & hygiene: safe drinking water, hygiene information and hygiene kits.
- Protection: psychosocial support for affected people, stress management training sessions.
- Shelter: bed linen, blankets, towels, kitchen sets, jerry cans, buckets for displaced people and host communities.

Large scale and rapidly evolving context: As the data shows, this is a large scale, sudden onset crisis, and the scale of the response has been very large, in a region where many Members had little presence. While this large-scale response is welcome, it brings a range of ‘scaling-up’ challenges, including establishing partnerships, recruiting staff and developing support systems, that were particularly evident in the early stages of the response.

In recent months, the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, which was already dire, has further deteriorated, with winter having come and the systematic destruction of critical infrastructure by the Russian military. A notable development is a call⁷ from Ukraine’s Government for those who have left the country not to return until after winter. Public statements have also been made about the possible need to evacuate Kyiv, due to the destruction of its energy and water infrastructure. Ukraine’s Government reports⁸ that the country has lost 50% of its power production. On 19 November, the CEO of DTEK (Ukraine’s major energy company) stated⁹ that Ukrainians should consider leaving the country for at least for 3-4 months to help save energy. With continuing attacks on infrastructure, the situation is likely to deteriorate further.

Another reason for a likely increased demand for humanitarian aid is related to liberation of Ukraine’s regions in September-November 2022, especially parts of Kharkiv, Donetsk and Kherson regions. Firstly, people who lived under occupation are now encouraged by the Government to leave these areas for safer regions, because the liberated areas are now heavily shelled by the Russian military and continue to be mine-contaminated. These people will need continued assistance. Secondly, for those who remain, improved humanitarian access allows aid to be brought to the several hundred thousand residents of these areas who remain, and who are badly in need of assistance.

3. Who we heard from

With support from DEC Members, in Poland, the Review heard from the following people / agencies:

- 9 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with DEC Members staff in Poland.
- 3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with DEC Members staff in Poland.
- 4 KIIs with local partners.
- 2 FGDs with local partners (4 to 6 participants per FGD representing different local partners).

⁷ <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/ukrainian-refugees-should-not-return-in-winter-deputy-prime-minister.html>

⁸ <https://ukranews.com/en/news/896078-almost-50-of-ukraine-s-power-system-disabled-by-russian-missiles-shmyhal>

⁹ <https://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2022/11/19/694029/>

- 1 FGD with local authority in Bydgoszcz.
- 2 FGDs with affected people (6 women per FGD).
- 2 Site visit and discussion with affected people in hosting centres.

4. Findings

This section presents the findings of the Review, structured according to the 9 CHS commitments. The findings in this report present an overall view of the response in the country; they do not assess specific Members and their performances.

4.1. CHS1: Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant

The response was relevant to the affected people fleeing the conflict from Ukraine to Poland and was delivered in line with strategies of individual DEC Members. The Review found that all members adhered to relevant internal and international technical standards across sectors.

At the beginning of the crisis, most DEC Members designed their programmes based on their previous experience, expertise, and knowledge of managing similar humanitarian crisis in the past, as well as the available information and data shared by UNHCR. Only a few members were able to conduct small-scale needs assessments to inform their programming and the delivery of services.

However, despite the lack of formal needs assessment at the start of the crisis, the Review found that the Members and their partners tried to adapt their activities and programming in the ground based on the emerging needs, and feedback they received from the affected people. For instance, one of the Members had to reallocate some of their budget from cash assistance to education programmes, because the results of the assessment they conducted showed that there was a lack of education support in the ground, while many other organisations were already providing cash assistance.

The ability to adapt the programming to ensure meeting people's needs was possible thanks to the flexibility of DEC funding. All DEC Members interviewed reported their satisfaction with the support they received from DEC in terms of its flexibility that allowed adjustment and re-planning of the response; such flexibility is considered as key good programming in such a complex context.

All DEC Members delivered their programmes through local partners, who have access and good reach to refugees from Ukraine in different regions and cities in Poland. The partnership approach allowed some Members to gain some time and start the operation quickly, and not wait until they have full presence in the country. However, this approach had its challenges, as most of Polish Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) had limited capacities and lack of experience in delivering humanitarian response. More details about the partnership approach and local capacities are discussed below (under CHS 3).

The Review revealed that the response was not necessarily aligned with the Polish Government strategy and priorities, partly because of the lack of information from the Government. All members and local partners interviewed confirmed that they were not able to collaborate with the central Government and that they are not very well informed about the Government strategy to support refugees from Ukraine. However, the Review showed some positive cases of coordination and collaboration between CSOs and local authorities in some regions.

4.2. CHS 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely

Interviews with DEC Members that provided feedback on key programme components, as well as reports shared with the review team showed that despite the challenges faced during the implementation phase, most of DEC Members were able to deliver their programmes and achieve their expected results. This was helped due to the efforts of DEC Members in deploying staff from different countries to support the response in Poland and fill the gap of local staff recruitment.

The response witnessed some delays during the first phase due to several challenges and constraints:

- The organisational registration process in Poland was slow.
- Most members lacked previous work experience in Poland.
- The process of procurement, hiring permanent staff, and finding the right local partners to support the implementation of the programmes took time.
- Staff turn-over affected the programmes and the work with local partners which led to some delays in the implementation.

During the first phase, DEC Members delivered programmes related to cash, protection, food, WASH, shelter, and education. Among these services, Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) was the most common support modality of almost all members.

The cash modality proved to be one of the most effective support modalities provided given the fact that Poland is a developed country with functional systems, but also this modality is adapted to the situation of refugees who are on the move most of the time.

The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with affected people as well as the Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) conducted by some of DEC Members showed that MPC programme is one of the most valuable and preferred support modalities for the affected people, because it gives some freedom and allows refugees to use it for their specific needs (medicine, rent, education etc.). They also reported that cash is more efficient because they do not need to queue for hours in order to receive in-kind support.

However, the FGD also showed that this modality is not working for everyone, especially for old women who are usually not able to do their own groceries, they confirmed that the in-kind support they received was more relevant for them.

In addition, the FGDs participants reported that one of the most pressing needs and challenges they face in Poland is “the rent.” The support provided so far by different organisations was not able to meet the needs in terms of finding safe shelter / rent for women and their kids. Moreover, the affected people who participated in the FGD¹⁰, reported that the duration and the amount of cash is not enough, as they cannot be independent and find jobs to support their families in 4 months. As the crisis is taking longer time than expected, some DEC Members reported that they are already planning recovery and integration programming while providing emergency short-term assistance.

There are only few examples of DEC Members that have made adaptations to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable persons with disabilities and LGBTQ communities are addressed, this was not found to be widespread among all DEC Members.

The members programmes' effectiveness could be affected by the political situation in Poland, as the elections due next year (2023), the country's policies on refugees and work with INGOs and NGOs might be affected. On top of this the situation in Ukraine is evolving. Therefore, the response would benefit from a risk analysis and contingency planning related to the political change and its impact in the country.

The effectiveness of the DEC Members programmes was also affected by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) limitations related to data sharing among humanitarian agencies, especially for cash programmes, where avoiding duplication was a key challenge, especially as refugees frequently move and cross borders.

¹⁰ The participants were asked specifically about the programme that was funded by DEC. it is important to note that all agencies are delivering other complementary programmes that are funded by other donors (e.g., cash for shelters).

4.3. CHS 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.

All DEC Members delivered most of their programmes through local partners. They followed their internal processes, due diligence, and procedures to select local partners and ensure effective delivery of the response. In order to navigate the challenges related to the long selection processes and due diligence, some Members provided small grants to grassroots CSOs, allowing them to start delivering small scale activities targeting refugees in their limited geographic areas. This approach helped them to start the activities quickly and meet the needs of affected people on a timely manner. Some DEC Members preferred to manage the whole response in Poland from their headquarter through international and local partners already present in Poland with good experience and knowledge of the local context. Overall, all partnership approaches followed by DEC Members proved to be successful and efficient, and contributed to strengthen local capacities, and localise the response.

The Review found that most Polish local organisations did not have the capacity to manage a large-scale humanitarian response. Most local partners are small organisations that used to work on limited scale development programmes and suddenly they found themselves in a situation where they had to change the nature of their work and to scale up rapidly to respond to the refugees' needs.

DEC Members established good relationship with local organisations and provided proper support to develop their capacities to deliver the programme activities in line with international standards and policies (financial management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), child protection policies, duty of care, safeguarding, etc.).

Interviews with local partners reveal that they appreciated the partnerships they developed with DEC Members and recognised the value of the support they received in terms of capacity strengthening, knowledge, and expertise in managing humanitarian response. This support helped them to overcome several challenges that they were facing since the start of the crisis (e.g., lack of Government support, limited resources and being overwhelmed responding at the border, and in towns and cities supporting refugees).

The capacity strengthening and support received by local partners aimed to ensure measures were in place for staff and child protection and ensuring safety to support protocols and appropriate behaviour when working with refugees. In addition, DEC Members delivered trainings on financial management, reporting as well as protection issues, such as safety and inclusive access that should be considered during the project's design and implementation to ensure safe programming within their broader organisational and programme activities.

However, some comments were shared by local organisations about the need of adapting some of the members' policies (e.g., safeguarding) to the local context in Poland. Most DEC Members use their standard policies that were developed in other contexts (such as in Africa, Middle East, or Asia), and use them in Poland without checking the extent to which these policies are relevant in the Polish context. This contributed to some delays that the response witnessed at the beginning of the crisis.

With regards to the work with the Government, the Review found that there are very limited opportunities for DEC Members and their partners to work with the central Government and contribute to strengthening their capacities. All members confirmed that they have no access to the central Government. However, the local partners in some regions manage to work closely with local authorities.

4.4. CHS 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation, and feedback

To help ensure that affected people have access to information they need on their rights and entitlements, DEC Members and their partners developed a range of tools to communicate and share information with affected people through social media and QR codes, posters, hotlines, and direct communication. The FGD with the affected people showed that their main source of information is social media (mainly Facebook) in addition to their friends and families.

The Review found that there is a need to improve communications around the members programmes to keep the affected people and the public informed of what they do and why and avoid potential conflict that could emerge between refugees from Ukraine and host communities.

The discussions with local partners revealed concerns about creating some conflict and doing harm in the mid and long term. The partners reported that some Polish people are already complaining about the limited support they receive while refugees from Ukraine are receiving more. These issues should be taken into consideration by members and their partners to ensure that their programmes are conflict sensitive and not creating frustrations among the hosting communities.

In addition, the participation of affected people and communities in the design of the programmes is very limited; only a few local partners reported that they involved refugees from Ukraine in the design of their activities, while most DEC Members partners design their projects based on their knowledge and experience.

4.5. CHS 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed

Almost all DEC Members established some feedback mechanisms (either directly or through their local partners) to collect ongoing complaints and feedback from affected people, including hotlines, call centres and face to face survey interviews and FGDs.

However, some cases showed that some mechanisms (such as hotlines, email addresses) are not effective because affected people are not used to share feedback, especially if they are not asked directly. Therefore, it was clear that there is a need to consult affected people about their preferred mechanisms and do more analysis to learn more about which mechanism is more appropriate and effective, to ensure that the voices of affected people are heard.

Furthermore, it was noted that some members and local partners conduct surveys and PDM to ask affected people about their feedback and satisfaction of the process and to collect information about the timeliness of assistance and lessons learnt to inform future project phases. However, this practice was not generalised and systematic among all DEC Members and local partners. Some local partners reported that they had no capacity to hire a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) staff member or conduct any systematic data collection during the first phase, but they are planning to change this for the upcoming phases of their programmes, as they recognise the importance of having strong feedback and learning systems that will allow them to be updated and learn about affected people's needs in a timely manner.

For DEC Members who received feedback through their feedback tools, they confirmed that most feedbacks were largely related to the cash activities, technical issues faced when accessing applications for registration, and complains about the limited amount of cash they receive, as it is not enough for them to buy necessary items (medicine, food, education etc.) and pay their rent, which is considered one of the main issues that affected people have to deal with in Poland.

4.6. CHS 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary

The Review found that there are some collaboration and coordination structures across the response in Poland, mainly through Working Groups led by UN members, such as Cash Working Group by UNHCR, which allows good coordination between different actors working on cash at national level. The group is considered as a good platform for all actors to share learning, to align operations, avoid duplication, agree on cash modalities, amount, and period. All DEC Members or their partners are part of this group.

However, the discussions confirmed that there is no coordination between DEC Members in Poland and no information exchange mechanism in place to prevent duplication and share lessons learned. The Member staff reported that they are not aware of the existence of other DEC Members, which was partially caused by the high staff turnover that the members have faced during the first phase of the response, and the lack of internal communication within the members.

It is worth mentioning that during the process of this current Review, a survey has been conducted by DEC Secretariat about the need for coordination between DEC Members, and based on the result of this survey, more actions will be taken by DEC Secretariat and members to discuss appropriate mechanisms for improved coordination.

Coordination at CSOs level is very weak. FGDs with local partners showed that there is a need for more coordination between CSOs at local and national level to foster better collaboration, effective work, avoid duplication and ensure that the needs of the refugees are met effectively. Various discussions are ongoing among civil society actors on how they can establish formal coordination mechanisms and build on what they have so far. Similarly, when asked about the coordination with central Government, the local partners confirmed that there is an absence of structured coordination with central Government, and the central Government is not open to support, work and / or coordinate with CSOs. However, for some regions, the local Government / authorities and CSOs are coordinating and working together.

One of the coordination and sharing information challenges that all international and local organisations are facing was related to GDPR and data protection strict policies. The fact that there were no pre-agreements in place, affected the sharing of information and sometimes the effectiveness of the response (especially for Cash programming).

All DEC Member Charities confirmed that more effort will be invested in the future to ensure better coordination with other DEC Members, Government and other actors delivering services in Poland and will continue the discussion with CSOs about better collaborations and coordination structures to ensure a better localisation of the response.

4.7. CHS 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve

A good commitment to learning has been observed among all DEC Member Charities and their partners. They are following their internal standards and M&E systems using project results frameworks, outcomes, outputs and activities and the collection of timely data to inform their programming on a regular basis.

Some challenges have been identified related to the capacity of some local partners in terms of monitoring and evaluations. The Review found that local partners capacity and knowledge of M&E vary from an organisation to another, for instance, big local organisations who used to work on large scale programmes, have already some systems in place, while the small organisations needed more support and capacity strengthening to be able to conduct systematic data collection and put in place learning mechanisms.

There was limited collection by DEC Members of lessons learned in the first phase and these have not been shared beyond the member itself. Most surveys and research have been done at very small scale, and their findings aimed at informing specific activities and programmes internally. No large-scale studies have been done so far where the learning was shared with different actors.

A considerable need was identified for research to better understand the changing context where the members are working; over time the needs of affected people change, and it was felt that there is no systematic process of information gathering on how these needs are changing and what are the new priorities.

During the period of the conduct of this Review, the team identified a lack of information about what the Government is providing as a support to refugees and how many are benefiting; this information would allow the INGOs / NGOs to complement the Government's work and to understand what type of programming works better. However, DEC Members confirmed that they are planning to conduct several studies, Real-Time Reviews (RTRs) and multi-sector needs assessments that will inform their winterisation plans and beyond.

4.8. CHS 8: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably

Recruitment of permanent staff members in Poland was one of the main challenges faced by almost all DEC Members. At the start of the crisis, DEC Members had to deploy team members from different countries to set up the response. Seven months later, the situation has improved but still not all Members are able to put in place all the resources needed to manage the response effectively.

When asked about the work environment and support provided to the staff of the Members, the responses varied between Member staff. Some teams are more established and reported that the work environment is flexible, and they work together to respond in the best way they could despite the workload they usually have. Most staff members reported that they suffered from the lack of proper orientation and handover when they joined the organisation in Poland, which creates duplications and some problems with the local partners.

Overall, all staff members are usually given access to training portals of the DEC Members, related to child protection, Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and have access to existing psychological support.

For the local partners, DEC Members delivered several capacity strengthening workshops and trainings (on child protection policies, safeguarding, protection, and accountability, etc.) following the identified needs and organised regular review meetings to ensure that they have proper implementation mechanisms to meet international standards.

4.9. CHS 9: Resources are managed effectively, efficiently, and ethically

DEC Members have strong track records in delivering humanitarian response in different context, and are committed to the CHS, to ensure engagement with and participation by affected people in different phases of their programming. During the first phase, the Review found that the engagement varied from an organisation to another, especially as most of the programmes were delivered by local partners. More time was dedicated to support and strengthen the capacities of the partners, to ensure proper delivery of the programmes in line with humanitarian principles and good practice.

DEC Members have processes in place for document control, procurement, list of pre-qualified suppliers, supervised distribution of supplies, and other governance and financial systems that were used during the first phase and set up of the operation in Poland. It was noted that some procurement policies and due diligence still need to be adapted to the Polish context.

A detailed assessment of efficiency or value for money was beyond the scope of this Review. However, some concerns were raised about the value for money of the approach that each Member followed during the set-up of the operation, as well as the cost efficiency of specific programmes. Discussions were ongoing about the priorities that the Members should focus on given the continuous change in the context and needs among the affected people.

5. Conclusions

At the beginning of the crisis, Polish Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and citizens were the first to react and provide support to refugees from Ukraine. The response of DEC Members in Poland was very relevant and provided tremendous support to the local organisations, volunteers, and host communities.

The start-up phase of the appeal witnessed several challenges related to the lack of track record and presence of most DEC Members in Poland. Recruitment of permanent staff and selection of local partners to support the implementation of the response were identified as the main challenges that faced different agencies, which affected the timeliness of the implementation of the response at the beginning.

Most organisations did not have the time to conduct proper and formal need assessments, they designed their programmes based on previous experiences and knowledge.

All DEC Members showed a good commitment to learn and adapt their programmes according to the reality in Poland and the refugees needs, and this was reflected in their proposals and progress reports.

The flexibility of DEC funding played a key role in allowing good adaptability of the programmes and helped the members to manage the challenges.

The response was not aligned with the Polish Government strategy and priorities as the contact between Government officials and INGOs and local CSOs was very limited, and the Government response strategy was not clearly shared with the actors involved in the response. However, the local authorities in some regions were very open and welcoming to the support they received from CSOs, and work together to complement the efforts.

Overall, DEC Members managed to achieve most of their programme expected outputs and results. They succeeded in developing appropriate strategies and partnerships approaches which allowed them to respond to the needs in the ground despite slight delays. They supported local partners and provided capacity strengthening in order to enable them to deliver the humanitarian response in line with the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS). This involved the delivery of training courses and workshops (safeguarding, child protection, procurement, financial management etc).

While the different programmes delivered by DEC Members and their partners answered the basic needs of the affected people, some needs that were identified as priority are still not fully met yet, mainly those related to rent and safe shelters. With time, the refugees' needs are evolving, and their priorities are changing, therefore, the members need to develop systematic learning mechanisms to keep informed on the changing context, needs and priorities.

For communication with affected people the Review concludes that there is room for improvement related to communication approach and strategies to ensure that affected people and host communities are well informed about their rights and entitlements. In addition, complaints and feedback mechanisms should be enhanced especially at the local partners' level; this would enhance programme learning and address emerging needs.

The Review concluded that collaborative learning between DEC Members is still missing in Poland. More engagement and coordination between the members at national or regional level would contribute to a more collaborative learning and reflection that builds on each member strength and support more effective programming.

Noting the political situation in Poland, with elections due next year elections that might influence the country's policies on refugees, a risk analysis related to the political change should be conducted by DEC Members, to avoid any negative impact that might affect the implementation of the programmes and its results.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations in this section are based on the findings and conclusion discussed above.

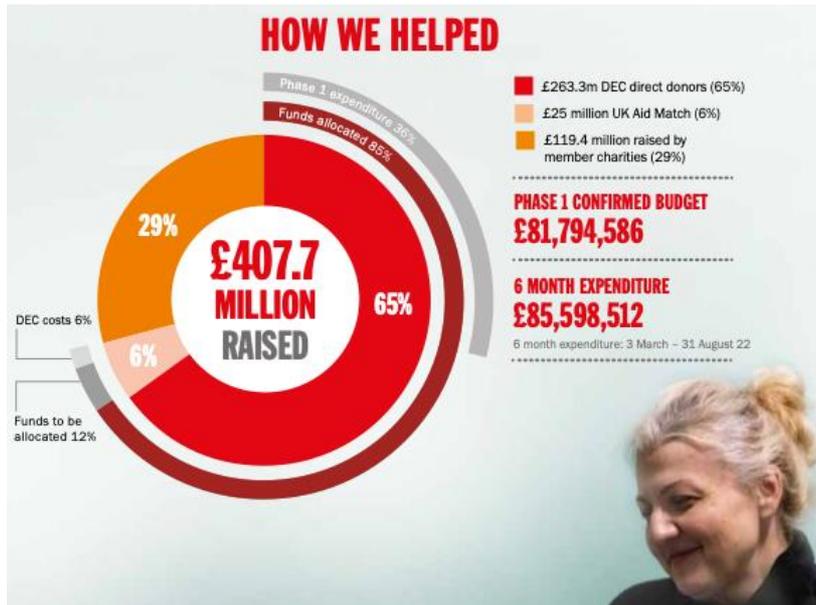
Keep, maintain and enhance the strong points of the response	Who
1. Working hard in difficult conditions, striving to meet the needs of people at risk in line with best practice.	<i>DEC secretariat and members.</i>
2. Maintain flexibility of DEC funding, to allow real-time adaptation of member programming to meet needs.	<i>DEC secretariat.</i>
3. Maintain the existing partnership approaches, the capacity strengthening, and support provided and deepen the relationships and trust with local partners.	<i>DEC Members.</i>
4. Continue with cash, complementing it where necessary with in-kind and service provision.	<i>DEC Members and their partners.</i>
Even better, develop further by:	Who
5. Ensure adequate contingency planning is being done as a group. While there is value in individual Members doing this, there is added value in doing so as a group, linking with other key actors, such as UNHCR, and Government if possible. This would help ensure members are prepared for a range of possible developments in the context, especially important given the unpredictability of the current situation.	<i>DEC Members and their partners.</i>
6. Ensure that programming is risk informed and intersectional so that it takes account of the varying risks faced by affected people, including those with disability, the LGBTQ community, the elderly, and Roma community.	<i>DEC Members and their partners.</i>
7. Collaborate more closely, and work with other humanitarian actors such as UNHCR, on regular formal and large-scale needs assessment on a regular basis. This would help ensure proper follow-up of the emerging needs of refugees and identify the unmet needs. Newly arrived refugees have different needs compare to those who have been in the country for more than 6 months.	<i>DEC Members and their partners.</i>
8. Conduct a thorough analysis of Government policies, strategies, and programmes on refugees from Ukraine. This would help ensure that the members programmes complement the work of the Government rather than duplicating or replacing the Government role.	<i>DEC Members / DEC secretariat could support.</i>
9. Update and adapt the policies and standards of DEC Members to the local context. This includes recognising, and not duplicating, policies that are already in place, such as safeguarding and duty of care.	<i>DEC Members.</i>
10. Enhance the communication with affected people to ensure that refugees and host communities are well informed about their rights and entitlements.	<i>DEC Members and their partners.</i>
11. Enhance communication and learning between DEC Members by establishing a simple cross learning platform, such as a monthly learning meeting. This would help foster the added value of DEC funding. It should be done with due consideration for existing learning and coordination mechanisms.	<i>DEC Members.</i>
12. Support the strengthening of coordination amongst local organisations, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).	<i>DEC Members and their partners.</i>

<p>13. Ensure that more emphasis is given to a conflict sensitive approach in programming, taking note of the tensions that can develop within host communities as the crisis lasts longer than expected.</p>	<p><i>DEC Members and their partners.</i></p>
<p>14. Provide more support to local partners to develop their monitoring, evaluation and learning systems including the use of complaint and feedback mechanisms.</p>	<p><i>DEC Members.</i></p>
<p>15. Ensure adequate and appropriate human resources are in place and providing technical and psychological support to enhance their capacity to deliver the response in the most effective way.</p>	<p><i>DEC Members and their partners.</i></p>
<p>16. Hold a collective discussion to facilitate data sharing in a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant manner amongst humanitarian actors in Poland and neighbouring countries. Data sharing is identified as one of the main challenges faced to avoid duplication, especially for cash programming, it is recommended to have a collective discussion about GDPR, put in place pre-agreements on data protection to facilitate data sharing among humanitarian actors in Poland and neighbouring countries.</p>	<p><i>DEC Members and their partners.</i></p>
<p>17. Review the cash assistance modality to ensure that is answering the needs of refugees, as feedback from affected people showed that while it is very useful and important, it is not considered enough to meet their needs, especially with the rent problems they are facing in Poland</p>	<p><i>DEC Members.</i></p>

Annexes

7. Overview of DEC Response

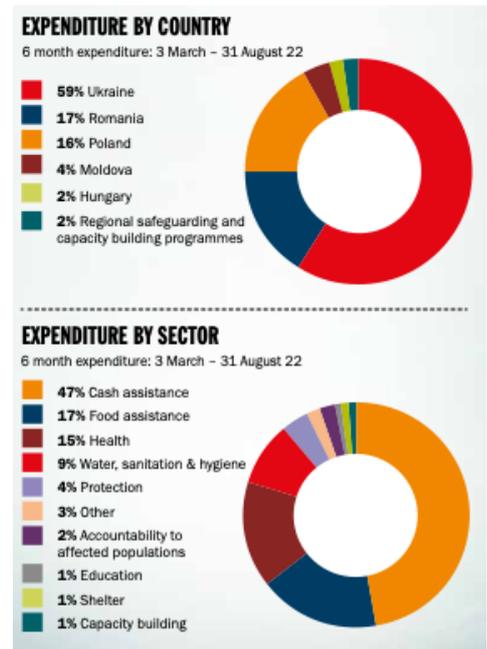
The charts and text below give a brief overview of the DEC Response¹¹.



After weeks of escalating tensions, the conflict in Ukraine began in the early hours of 24 February 2022. Intense clashes and aerial attacks forced thousands of families to flee as their homes were destroyed and essential infrastructure such as water supplies, hospitals and schools were damaged.

Within a week, more than one million people had fled Ukraine and many more were displaced inside the country. Hundreds of thousands of people began to cross the borders into neighbouring countries, mostly women and children who arrived with only what they could carry. With the country on the brink of a humanitarian crisis, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) launched an appeal on 3 March 2022 for people affected by the conflict, including refugees, those displaced within Ukraine and people still in situ. 13 DEC Member charities are responding with DEC funds to the crisis in Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Moldova and Hungary.

The conflict caused Europe's fastest growing displacement crisis since World War II. Nearly 13 million people fled their homes in less than two months – almost a third of the population. There has been widespread urban devastation and destruction of civilian infrastructure. Around 300 health facilities are in conflict areas and many health workers have been displaced or are unable to work. Almost half of Ukraine's pharmacies are thought to be closed. In April 2022, it was reported that 1.4 million people in Ukraine had no access to water, and another 4.6 million people had only limited access. By June 2022, 15.7 million people were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance; this figure rose to 17.7 million by October 2022.



¹¹ From the DEC's 6 month report, March to August 2022.

8. Purpose and Scope of Review

8.1. Purpose

The primary purpose of the Real-Time Review is to instigate collective real-time reflection and learning to inform adjustments across DEC Members' responses. The Review draws on the initial phase of the response in order that lessons be applied in real-time and into the second phase of the Members' programmes. Recognising the lead role played by national and local actors in the crisis response to date, and the DEC's own commitments to strengthen localisation efforts, attention to how DEC Members are establishing and scaling up their responses in ways that are complementary to and reinforcing of local humanitarian action was an important part of the picture. The RTR serves an accountability function, both to communities and people affected by crisis¹², as well as to the UK public and other key supporters of the DEC appeal.

The Review aims to:

- Provide an overview and assessment of the response so far against the Core Humanitarian Standard commitments (CHS).
- Draw out key lessons, at operational level, that can inform real-time adjustments and be utilised during implementation of on-going DEC programmes.
- Highlight good practice in the humanitarian operations funded by the DEC.
- Where relevant, identify gaps, areas of unmet needs, and challenges to the humanitarian operations funded by the DEC, from both a sectoral and cross-cutting perspective.
- Inform the partnership approach of DEC Members (including their relationship with national and local partners).
- Explore the extent to which the implementation of the CHS contributes towards high quality and accountable programme plans.

8.2. Scope and limitations

The Review covered the humanitarian response in 5 countries, conducted by 13 Members and supported by the DEC Secretariat. For this, a total of 202 consultant-days¹³ was available. In line with this and the scope of the humanitarian action, the Review included in-country fieldwork in Ukraine and Poland, remote missions for Romania and Moldova and a more limited remote mission for Hungary.¹⁴ Due to the breadth in scope and in line with the TOR, the Review focused on 'areas of enquiry most relevant and meaningful to them (DEC Members) as a collective.'

A limitation was the fact that not all DEC Members and local partners have physical presence in one location. Instead, their main offices are scattered around Ukraine and Europe, requiring their staff to regularly depart for travels, which due to security concerns, take a long time. Therefore, it was impossible to gather representatives of DEC Members operating in Ukraine and their local partners in one place, so online discussions were necessary. Furthermore, the busy schedules of stakeholders made it impossible for everyone to participate in the Review and prevented certain Members from delegating the same representatives for different discussions in the Review, which would have helped with consistency. In Ukraine, an additional limitation was the security situation, which limited travel within the country.

As the Review focused on what was heard from a wide range of stakeholders about the overall response, it was not generally feasible to disaggregate that part of the response funded by the DEC. Similarly, given the breadth of the Review, it was not practical to go into depth on the responses of any one Member. In this regard, it is noted

¹² In line with CHS commitment 7 "humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve".

¹³ One consultant working for one day gives one consultant-day, a team of 4 working for 50 days gives 200 consultant-days.

¹⁴ Ukraine and Poland were chosen as this is where the majority of the affected people are, which has also translated into where DEC and its Members plan to spend the majority of funding – 54% in Ukraine and 20 % in Poland.

that individual Members have been conducting their own reviews, and this review should be seen as complimentary to those.

9. Review Concepts and Approach

9.1. Concepts

Key aspects of the conceptual framework of the Review are outlined briefly below. These align closely with the concepts underpinning the Terms of Reference (TOR) and the DEC strategy.

Guided by TOR: The Review adhered closely to the key requirements of the TOR, noting, in particular, the requirement for *'real-time reflection and learning to inform adjustments across DEC Members' responses,* bearing in mind the DEC's plans for Phase 2. It also provides a strong element of accountability, notably through its engagement with affected people and allowing another, independent, channel for their voices to be heard by the DEC.

Centred on affected people and communities, participation by humanitarian actors: The Review centred on the people and communities affected by the crisis. As illustrated in the simplified diagram below, the Review aimed to act as an independent channel for the voice of affected people to reach the DEC, complementing the current mechanisms through which the DEC hears their voices.

This centring on affected people aligns with the DEC Accountability Framework and the Grand Bargain commitment (No. 6) to a 'Participation Revolution'. In line with this, the Review notes the work of Ground Truth Solutions (GTS), which the DEC has commissioned to ascertain the perceptions of people on the humanitarian response¹⁵.

The Review is informed by a 'risk-informed approach,' which seeks to understand how affected people cope with the risks they face, including considerations of the main hazards faced, and their capacities and vulnerabilities that affect their ability to manage their risks. This understanding is informed by an intersectional approach, noting how risk varies with characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, class and location.

In so doing, the Review explored how the humanitarian action is enhancing the agency of affected people and their communities, supporting their resilience and 'doing no harm.'

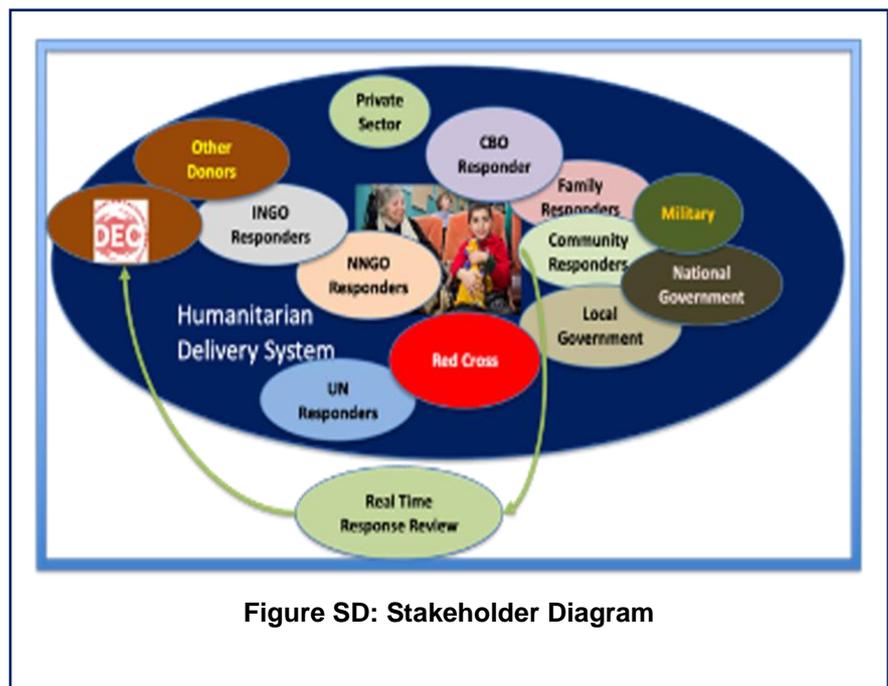


Figure SD: Stakeholder Diagram

recruited, trained, supported, and released. Recognising this, and complementing the voice of affected people, the review sought to hear directly from and give voice to the aid workers on the ground.

The Review briefly examined the structure and architecture of the humanitarian system, noting in particular how it supports and builds local capacity in a spirit of partnership and the nature of coordination with local actors. In

¹⁵ <https://www.groundtruthsolutions.org/projects/a-locally-informed-humanitarian-response-insights-from-ukraine>

Linking the above, noting the need to review how the affected people participate in decisions that affect them, the Review will ask how humanitarian actors engage with affected people and participate in their decisions and actions in managing their risks. In doing so it examined the role that DEC plays, and can play, in this complex set of relationships.

Engaging with the aid worker: Within the complex set of relationships that form the humanitarian system, the relationship between the aid worker¹⁶ and the affected people is key, as the aid worker is one of the main interfaces with affected people. As has been learned over decades, and as is reflected in Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) commitment No. 8, the competence of the aid workers is crucial to an effective response; this includes how the aid workers are recruited, trained, supported and released. Recognising this, and complementing the voice of affected people, the review sought to hear directly from and give voice to the aid workers on the ground.

The Review briefly examined the structure and architecture of the humanitarian system, noting in particular how it supports and builds local capacity in a spirit of partnership and the nature of coordination with local actors. In this examination, the role of DEC Members was explored, particularly in relation to their engagement with local actors and through them with affected people.

Learning and improving: It has long been recognised¹⁷ that learning is central to effective humanitarian action, bringing learning in from previous operations, sharing and supporting learning within an operation, and taking that learning out for other contexts. The Review examined how such learning was fostered within this operation and how lessons are identified and applied in practice to bring about improvements, including ‘are we doing things right, are we doing the right things?.’ In doing so, it notes that learning is a mutual, two-way process.

Truth to power: The consultants understand the need for an external, independent and professional source of information ready to ‘speak truth into power’ and acknowledge the full support of the DEC in this regard. It gives due regard to confidentiality, especially for key informants.

9.2. Approach and priorities

The Review was conducted in line with the DEC’s Accountability Framework (see below), noting the centrality of communities and people affected by the crisis, the Humanitarian Principles and the nine CHS commitments.

The nature of the Review was light-touch, qualitative and participative; it aimed to harvest and document real-time key learnings.

- Light, rapid and participatory.
- Use of appreciative inquiry (what is working well, how to improve, key challenges).
- A critical friend / sparring partner stance, promoting dialogue, constructive criticism and learning.
- Open and adaptive, learning within the review and adapting the review as needed.



¹⁶ In this context an ‘aid worker’ is anyone providing assistance or support to affected people, whether working informally or for an ‘official’ agency.

¹⁷ An example was the formation of ALNAP (the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance).

- Practical and realistic, recognising the human and logistical constraints involved in the response and the Review.
- Rigorous and evidence-based, as far as possible within the constraints of this Review.

The Review was concerned to learn was the response ‘doing the right things and doing them in the right way.’ Arising from the consultations and review in the inception phase, the following 5 priorities were identified to guide the Review:

- Are affected people at the centre and is their voice being heard and acted on?
- How healthy and functional is the relationship between DEC Members and local organisations (including Government): is the DEC engaging as well as it could?
- Are ‘frontline’ aid workers / volunteers / local groups being well supported in their work?
- Is the DEC and its Members able to respond quickly and well to rapidly changing circumstances, predicted (such as winter) and unpredicted (such as changes in the conduct of the conflict)?
- Is learning being promoted at all relevant levels (including DEC board level) through structures and processes that work and result in improved practice (both in Ukraine and elsewhere)?

10. Review Methodology and Deliverables

10.1. Methodology

A mix of methods and tools were used, and a wide variety of information sources were consulted to facilitate triangulation and verification of data. The mix was developed during the initial inception, during the country briefing workshops and adapted in line with the realities on the ground. The tools included:

- A focused review of secondary data, including key documents, agreed with the DEC¹⁸.
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), semi-structured in nature.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).
- Observation, including onsite visits and attendance at operational meetings (where possible).
- Participatory analysis, incorporated in the FGDs.

The Review questions were developed to expand and better understand the implementation and performance of DEC funded programmes. A review matrix was developed during the inception phase and was used to inform the conduct of the review.

The phasing of the review is outlined and discussed briefly below:



¹⁸ Secondary data will also be obtained from Ground Truth Solutions (GTS), with whom CMC will coordinate throughout the assignment. CMC have contacted with GTS in the inception phase and are liaising with them, with support from DEC. CMC will explore how to utilise the data from GTS to inform the review and in particular to triangulate the findings from the qualitative data collected in the review. Additionally, during the inception phase the data collection tools will be informed by the initial findings of GTS, and CMC will make sure that there is complementarity.

Inception: During this phase, the team conducted a preliminary desk review, a range of inception interviews, drafted the inception report, held a participatory inception workshop, finalised the inception report and made the necessary logistical preparations for the field work.

Field work with debrief: The field work was conducted from late September into November 2022, starting with the in-person field missions to Ukraine and Poland, and followed by remote missions to Romania, Moldova and Hungary. The fieldwork involved a considerable amount of discussion between DEC Members and with others, so facilitating reflection and learning throughout the process.

Initial analysis and Aide Memoire: After the field work, an Aide Mémoire for each country was prepared and shared with the DEC Secretariat and through them with the DEC Members. This was to allow for early feedback to inform the design and implementation of Phase 2, in advance of the more formal country and synthesis reports.

During this phase, the initial findings, conclusion and tentative recommendations were presented and discussed at an online learning workshop held on Friday 4 November.

Data analysis and reporting: During this phase, the review team conducted further analysis of the data and drafted the country reports.

Reporting and Presentation: During this phase, drafts of the reports will be reviewed and discussed, and a final presentation made.

10.2. Deliverables

The deliverables are as follows:

Deliverable	Date
An inception report submitted to the DEC Secretariat and presented to Members as part of an inception meeting in London or online.	12 Sep 2022
Facilitation of the inception workshop sessions with DEC Members and their partners.	12 Sep 2022
Facilitation of in-country briefing workshops for DEC Members and partners.	3 Oct 2022
Contribute to DEC Members Humanitarian Directors' Meeting.	4 Oct 2022
Facilitation of in-country learning / debriefing workshops at close of field work phase.	17 Oct 2022
5 Aides Mémoire, one for each country, submitted after completion of field work.	End Oct 2022
Contribute to a DEC Membership and Accountability Committee Meeting.	3 Nov 2022
Contribution to a response wide learning workshop at the end of the field work.	4 Nov 2022
Five brief draft country reports (this report) and a draft Synthesis report.	Late Nov 2022
Presentation at debriefing meetings with DEC Secretariat and Members (and possibly FCDO) in London or online.	Early Dec 2022
Receive comments from DEC Members & Secretariat.	Late Dec 2022
Finalise the 5 country reports and synthesis report.	Early Jan 2023
Submit the final reports.	Late Jan 2023

It is noted that a key result of the real-time review is *collective real-time reflection and learning* on the part of the DEC Members, the Secretariat and local organisations. In addition to reports and other knowledge documents, this reflection and learning has been facilitated during the course of the review by the discussions at the interactive and participatory workshops listed above.

11. Reflections from the Real-Time Review (RTR)

11.1. Using the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)

These notes are provided to give some reflections on the use of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) in the response and in the review itself. It is not intended as a comprehensive review, which is beyond the scope of this Real-Time Review (RTR).

For the Review: The CHS gives a useful framework for the Review and discussions. It helps keep discussions structured but is not too complicated.

For a full learning exercise, it would be a useful part of the package.

For supporting the response: DEC Members were familiar with it – so that is good. In the view of the review team, it provides a useful framework for checking that the response is doing what it should be doing. However, it must be used as part of a package, alongside assessment (risk-informed approach),

planning (the logical planning framework) and implementation methods (project cycle) and linked to a credible Theory of Change.

Suggested improvements:

- **CHS1 and 2** Amalgamate them – very hard to separate these in discussions or analysis.
- **CHS 4** – Review this to ensure participation is the right way around – that agencies recognise they are participating with affected people, local organisations and Government. There is still a strong (and understandable) tendency for aid workers to see 'participation' as meaning how 'beneficiaries' participate in the response, rather than how agencies participate with affected people. Review wording in light of the proposed principle set out below.
- **CHS 8:** This needs strengthening, for example "Policies are in place, are implemented in practice and regularly reviewed" for the various items.

Statement of principle: 'our rights respected and risks managed': *We, the people affected by disaster, assert our right to assistance that helps ensure our rights are respected and that supports us in managing the risks we face and in coping and developing as communities and individuals. Such assistance will be based on a sound assessment of the hazards we face, respect for our capacities as well as our needs and will be designed and provided in a framework that is people-centred and community-led, with appropriate external agency participation, and which enhances our resilience to future risks.*

As affected people, we have a right to participate in the governance of the assistance provided by external actors, by having meaningful representation in oversight and governance mechanisms.

A key competency of external actors and their staff shall be their ability to engage with us as affected people, with competence and respect. Their selection, preparation and training shall include this aspect.

11.2. Learning about learning

Good responses are supported by good learning and a RTR can be one useful component of the learning support package, alongside others. DEC as a collective is well placed to support this process, and perhaps even to extend it, seeing it as an 'investment not a cost.'

In looking at what constitutes a learning support package for a response, the following points may be considered.

Firstly, a useful question to guide the design of the learning is: *What do we need to learn and how can we best meet the learning needs of the organisation as well as groups of individuals within the organisation?*¹⁹

Theory of Change for learning: In current parlance, work with an evidence-based theory of change that supports effective learning, at all relevant levels, including individual, organisational and institutional.

Agree on the key metric for effective learning, proposed as an improvement in practice (not simply more knowledge).

Who needs to learn?

- Affected People, the starting point: what do we (affected people) need to know and learn in order to cope with our situation?

¹⁹ <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/from-real-time-evaluation-to-real-time-learning>

- Individual aid workers (MASKS²⁰, Technical & Operational Competence including Welfare).
- Country team and operations (MEAL, the Project Cycle, Systematic Induction and Briefing of staff).
- DEC Members: from board to field worker, linking to organisational capacity, recognising key drivers of learning.
- Between Members – supporting collective learning.
- DEC Secretariat – including as a facilitator.
- DEC Board – strategic lessons to be learned, including monitoring the learning process itself.
- Broader humanitarian community, recognising the convening and advocacy potential of the DEC.

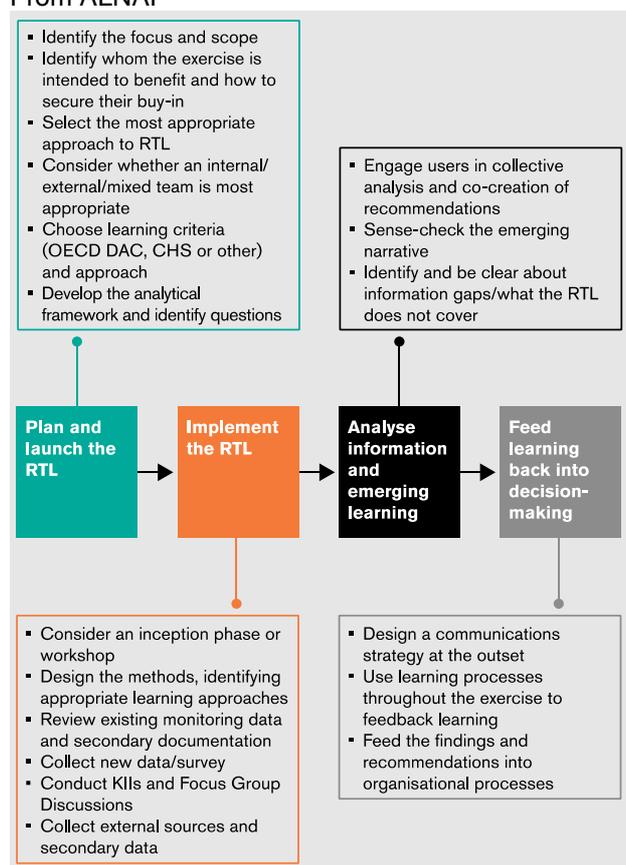
Cycle of learning: Consider the full cycle of learning:

- Before: Bringing learning in from previous experiences.
- During: Sharing learning around and developing learning.
- After: Taking learning out and incorporating into practice, using policies, procedures and support.

Learning Process: At the DEC level, provide for linking current learning exercises to learning from previous exercises, including reviews and/or evaluations by the DEC, and taking on board external sources of good practice (e.g. ALNAP, see below). As part of this process, check how previous learning has been incorporated by the DEC (at board, Secretariat, and Member level).

During a crisis look at how learning is supported, developed and shared during the course of the crisis, at all levels. Consider developing a simple mechanism to support further learning between DEC Members, including regular exchanges and sharing of key information (such as learning from Member reviews).

From ALNAP²¹



²⁰ Motivation, Attitude, Skills, Knowledge and Support - elements of competence

²¹ <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/from-real-time-evaluation-to-real-time-learning>

11.3. Real-Time Review (RTR) Process

The RTR was appreciated by all the stakeholders. In addition to being seen as good practice, it also gave them a forum to feed back to the DEC through an independent channel. This is also an important point for DEC governance. The emphasis on collective reflection and learning was well judged.

How can this process itself be improved?

- Results focus: clarify the desired learning result (e.g. improvement in practice).
- Strengthen the focus on learning, reduce that on evaluation. Review the language used in the TOR.
- Keep: light-touch, rapid, qualitative, participative.
- Enhance: Participatory nature with a focus on real-time learning during the review e.g. emphasise in-country learning workshops. Note the action taken on the proposal for coordination between DEC Member.
- Timing – Consider starting earlier in the response; start commissioning process as soon as possible after appeal is launched, use 'light touch reporting' even more, participatory workshops and Aides Mémoire.
- Duration – Run the RTR in parallel with the response, not just as a 'one-off' review.
- Framework: Clarify from the start that the CHS is to be used as the basic framework for the review
- Scope: Encourage a more strategic 'whole of the response' approach, including initial decision to launch, the allocation of funds and the engagement by DEC Members. Link to overall DEC learning process, 'before and after' (see below). Avoid going into low-level operational detail at Member level.
- Reporting: Reduce the amount and time involved, use the Aide Memoire format for country reports and one synthesis report.