Disaster Planning and Preparedness

Appeal No. MAA00021

19/08/2008

This report covers the period 01/01/2008 to 01/07/2008.

Shahidul Islam, a member of the Community Disaster Preparedness committee, takes part in a disaster preparedness training in Kalaparam, Bangladesh. The committees are made up of between 11 and 13 members with a high representation of women. They play a key role in disaster preparedness by identifying vulnerability, working with households; and alerting and organizing the community. International Federation

In brief

Programme purpose: To reduce the number of deaths and vulnerability to disasters through the development and effective use of national, regional, and international Red Cross and Red Crescent capacities and resources.

Programme(s) summary: The Disaster Policy and Preparedness department helps create a more integrated and responsive approach to disaster management by realigning its policy and programme support in a number of areas such as preparedness, risk reduction and food security. In consultation and close cooperation with other departments, National Societies and external partners, the department will provide assistance in three mutually reinforcing areas: policy, principles and standards; capacity building at the regional (zones), national, and local (communities, branches and local authorities) level; and in knowledge and performance management.

Financial situation: This appeal 2008 budget has been revised from CHF 3,801,000 to CHF 3,176,000 (USD 3,025,000 and EUR 1,952,000) mainly because the recruitment and related costs of
three positions have been put on hold. Coverage stands at 88% and expenditure was 47%.

Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.

No. of people we help: Over seven million people have benefited from disaster response in 2008.

Our partners: The International Federation secretariat works in partnership with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee members (IASC) working group on risk-informed humanitarian action. It is a member of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), and participates in the global platform for disaster risk reduction. It also works with the World Bank and the ProVention Consortium.

Context

The follow up to the General Assembly and the International Conference in 2007, has set the context for disaster planning and preparedness at the global level. In particular, the focus for follow up is around two themes: a) preparedness and response to disasters, and b) the humanitarian consequences of environmental deterioration and climate change. Sixty-six participating members of the International Conference made pledges to minimize the impact of disasters in their countries, while 60 members made pledges to work towards reducing the impact of climate change.

The three objectives outlined in the plan a) policy, principles and standards; b) National Society capacity building; and c) knowledge management, contribute to the themes outlined above. Planned activities under the disaster, planning and preparedness plans improve the support provided to the countries who pledged their intent in working towards the follow up of the International Conference.

Analysis of the disaster data for 2007\(^1\) confirms the initial context analysis that there is a clear upward trend in the occurrence of natural disasters. This upward trend is especially driven by the increase in number of reported weather-related disasters such as floods, storms, cyclones, droughts, and extreme temperatures.

The same analysis also shows that despite a steady increase in the overall disaster occurrence, the number of reported victims remained relatively stable over the last decade. This decreasing trend raises questions as to its origin. Is it the result of a better preparedness, a better response of government and humanitarian agencies during emergencies, or is it due to improvements in the reporting of disaster occurrence and impacts? So far, answers to these questions are far from clear, but efforts will be made to better understand the impact of various disaster reduction efforts by the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Progress towards outcomes

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s)

Policy, Principles and Standards

Objective 1: To increase community orientation in global and national disaster risk reduction policies, and to strengthen national and local institutions for disaster risk reduction.

Expected Results:

\(^1\)
• Policies, strategies and guidelines related to disaster management (including preparedness, relief, recovery, food security, protection and risk reduction) are well understood within the International Federation and by the external stakeholders/partners, and being actively implemented by National Societies and zonal offices.
• The various policies, strategies and guidelines in disaster management (DM), as well as in other relevant areas of work, such as organizational development and health, are complementary and mutually reinforcing.
• The department has made a significant contribution to supporting awareness raising and the effective implementation of the new International Federation performance and accountability framework, as it applies to DM-related work, including the development and implementation of a Federation-wide DM performance indicators.

Achievements

In line with the revision of the International Federations Strategy 2010 and the development of a new institutional vision for the future, it has been decided to revise the entire policy framework of the International Federation. The aim is to ensure that the policy framework of the institution best reflects and serves the needs of the membership, as well as provides appropriate guidance in all of its actions.

The revision process will include the analysis of all existing policy and policy-related documents, and the rewriting of relevant texts. At the same time, a concise handbook and training package aimed at linking policy and practice will be developed that can be used or adapted by National Societies with their governments to help strengthen national level disaster response and preparedness planning.

The process will be carried out in conjunction with the membership through working groups, regional meetings and consultations.

• In moving the policy agenda of disaster risk reduction at the global level, the International Federation continued to lead an Inter-Agency Steering Committee working group on risk-informed humanitarian action, and provided a significant contribution to two European Union (EU) initiatives: that of developing an EU-wide communication on disaster risk reduction, and on an evaluation of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into humanitarian action.

Constraints or challenges

The policy revision has a tight timeframe as the consultation process and submission of revised drafts and associated documents need to be submitted to the International Federation’s statutory decision-making bodies by October 2009.

Capacity Building

Objective 2: Increase National Societies’ capacities to support communities to reduce vulnerabilities and disaster impacts.

Expected Results:
• Training and development of staff and volunteers have improved National Societies’ capacity to provide relevant and participatory approaches in DM that have contributed to reducing community vulnerabilities and impact from disasters.
• National Societies have met or exceeded the minimum standards of a well-prepared National Society (WPNS), and have increased their capacities for monitoring and preparing for the consequences and interaction of emerging challenges, such as climate change, and of chronic vulnerabilities, such as food insecurity.
• National Societies’ systems, procedures and structures are appropriate, effective and efficient in delivering services and support to the public.
• Disaster risk and vulnerability assessments implemented by National Societies for risk reduction, preparedness and response actions have incorporated gender issues.

Achievements

The International Federation has supported the development of needs-based planning through this Appeal by the development of tools for National Societies. The well-prepared National Societies questionnaire (WPNS) is a joint initiative with the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) which helps National Societies identify their needs and priorities for preparedness and response to disasters. Based on the characteristics of WPNS, and following the training in the recommended participatory methodology, a total of 77 (44 as of January 2008) National Societies in the Americas, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions have been trained for using the tool. Some of the National Societies are using WPNS as a basis for planning, to develop strategies and indicators to measure impact, and to develop national disaster management master plans.

In support of the capacity development of National Societies, technical support was provided to two regional vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) training workshops (one with a unique urban focus). Two VCA training DVDs were produced, and National Society staff were supported to attend the ProVention forum in Panama. Additionally two DVD productions on disaster risk reduction were finalized in collaboration with the British Red Cross Society, ProVention and five UK-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The UK Department for International Development (DFID)/British Red Cross Society supported a three-year disaster risk reduction programme (Disaster Risk (DR) Phase II) which formally ended on 30 April 2008. DFID and the British Red Cross Society will continue to support disaster risk reduction through the wider five-year DFID/British Red Cross Society/International Federation Institutional Strategy (2007–2011). A final evaluation of DR Phase II is expected to help inform how the International Federation delivers effective disaster risk reduction solutions, and will be made available by August 2008.

An assessment methodology for pre-VCA and post-emergency assessment (EA) disaster has been harmonized and standardized with the publication of Emergency Assessment (EA) Guidelines, March 2008 and Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA) – Training Guide, April 2008. Efforts are now ongoing to update the assessment modules in the various DM trainings conducted by the International Federation.

After extensive discussions, a first draft of the International Federation secretariat’s Early Warning, Early Action system is coming together. This system will bring together early warning (EW) knowledge, and feed into the structures of secretariat for early action (EA). At the community level, guidelines are being researched for creating community-based monitoring systems that National Societies could develop to complement the secretariat EWEA system.

Initial results from the test phase of the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanism (NDPRM) guidelines suggest that both approach and content of the document is relevant for the development of appropriate National Society disaster management systems. There are also some initial indications that these guidelines will need to be supplemented with standard disaster management training modules as articulated within the guidelines.

Technical assistance continues to be provided for integrating the secretariat’s human pandemic preparedness initiative into a wider National Society disaster preparedness framework, using existing approaches where appropriate.
Lessons learned from the tsunami recovery programme are being implemented through discussions for revising the *Red Cross and Red Crescent principles of disaster relief* and integrating the psychological support programme into a wider preparedness framework at the National Society level.

**Constraints or challenges**

So far 41 per cent of National Societies have participated in the second phase of WPNS which is to come to an end in October 2008. There has been a very low response rate from Western Europe and the Pacific.

Slow Appeal coverage has meant that the second senior officer, disaster preparedness position has remained vacant during the first six months. This has resulted in slow progress in some of the key initiatives for the year, especially around public awareness/education.

**Knowledge Management**

**Objective 3:** To support and promote good practice and policy in disaster management and risk reduction.

**Expected Results:**
- Current knowledge on good practice developed and readily accessible to National Societies and external organizations.
- Information on global risk patterns and trends made available and used by the zonal offices, National Societies and other stakeholders.
- Key Federation principles and priorities influencing internal/external practice through advocacy activities.
- Optimum use of resources through alliances and effective cooperation.

**Achievements**

The 2008 *World Disasters Report (WDR)* focusing on HIV/AIDS was launched on 26 June 2008 by over 90 National Societies, country representatives and zones. The report highlights that the AIDS epidemic is a disaster on many levels. Man-made and “natural” disasters exacerbate other drivers of the epidemic, and can also increase people’s vulnerability to infection.

The WDR team is working on, and developing the content for the 2009 edition. The report will focus on early warning and early response. The editorial board should be in place by July and writers should be contracted by beginning September, with the report going to the design/production phase by end January 2009.

To promote knowledge sharing, the International Federation captures lessons learned from operations. A number of new publications and case studies have been developed on VCA, *guidelines for assessment in emergencies* (in cooperation with the ICRC), the Spanish version of the *global food security assessment guidelines* and two food security-related case studies (one highlighting the experience of the Mali Red Cross Society and the other on Togo).

Further, two videos on VCA have also been developed:
- *ABC of VCA* – a five minute video explaining the basics of VCA.
- *VCA* – a twenty minute video on the different steps of VCA, based on three VCA learning-by-doing workshops in Lesotho, Bangladesh and Panama.
Special sections on FedNet have been developed for the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction in the partnership section, food security and high food crisis. The French version of the disaster management resource framework is underway.

The new disaster management section went live on 7 February 2008 – some updates have already been done, especially in terms of disaster risk reduction. There is also a special page for the launch of the food security five-year strategy on 10 April 2008, and the launch of WDR on 26 June 2008.

**Working in partnership**

The process of revising the policy will involve all 186 National Societies, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross. It is also critical that policy guidance takes into account coordination with other agencies working alongside the International Federation and its members. Therefore, consultation will also involve dialogue and meetings with other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Collaboration continued with the ISDR System and other bodies. This included attending the ISDR System Management Oversight Board (MOB), contributing to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/ISDR workshop on risk assessment, as well as being part of a multi-agency event, led by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on considering the linkage between climate change and HIV and AIDS. The partnership with five UK NGOs to deliver specific disaster risk reduction tools has been ongoing, there has been significant collaboration with ProVention, and considerable time has been invested in shaping how disaster risk reduction is addressed through humanitarian action working with the IASC and the EU.

Discussions with World Meteorological Organization are ongoing to help establish national level partnerships with Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, and national meteorological offices to create a functioning early warning system for humanitarian organizations. Initial partnerships are being explored in Americas, Asia Pacific and Africa.

**Contributing to longer-term impact**

National Societies as leading disaster response and preparedness actors in their countries and as auxiliaries to their governments need to have direction and guidance in their activities that reflect the neutral and impartial nature of their work. Clear policy guidance is a precondition to effectively implement activities on the ground, and helps guide planning and preparedness for today and tomorrow’s future disasters. Policy also needs to help National Societies coherently understand and link effectively the different activities for which they are involved in. For example; in the areas of first aid, risk reduction and gender-based violence.

Identifying good practices and sharing experiences on disaster risk reduction was carried out through four distinct forums. A workshop in Kathmandu brought together National Society staff from Africa and Asia to reflect on how to address disaster risk reduction at the local level. Sessions were held in both Panama and Rabat to exchange experiences, and consider a draft disaster risk reduction framework. A two-day cross-regional workshop on DR Phase II was held in Johannesburg.

In order to minimize the impact of disasters, National Societies in countries prone to natural hazards need to have an effective disaster preparedness programme in place. Implementation of effective capacity-building strategies and disaster preparedness programmes must be based on an accurate review of the existing capacities/programmes. WPNS has already proved to be a useful tool in disaster preparedness mapping. It is recognized by the National Societies that
WPNS can serve as a vital source of information, and help indicate the most urgent issues to be taken into account while responding to an emergency.

The revised EA guidelines, with their Movement-wide endorsement, would lead to an improved standardization of assessment methodology contributing to the wider humanitarian reform effort.

Looking ahead

Policy ultimately needs to be relevant to all 186 National Societies as the priorities and challenges in each context vary enormously. Therefore, the ultimate aim of the policy revision process is that National Societies use the policy to help strengthen national level disaster preparedness and planning with their governments and other actors. The International Federation will in the future provide more support to National Societies in strengthening national level policy making.

The second half of the year will focus on ensuring optimum buy-in to the new disaster risk reduction’s resilience framework, and in establishing partnerships, and generating resources, to help National Societies deliver disaster risk reduction at the local and national level.

The focus for the rest of the year will be to finalize the NDPRM guidelines. At the same time, first drafts for the new guidelines on community-based early warning systems and public awareness/education will also be developed.

### How we work

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<tr>
<th>The International Federation’s activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation’s mission to “improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity”.</th>
<th><strong>Global Agenda Goals:</strong></th>
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<td>• Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.</td>
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<td>• Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.</td>
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<td>• Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.</td>
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### Contact information

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