

Report 2006-2007

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Middle East

Appeal No. MAA81001

03/04/2008

This report covers the period of 01/01/06 to 31/12/07 of a two-year planning and appeal process.



Palestine Red Crescent-Lebanon Branch honoured the children volunteers with medals and trophies. **Palestine Red Crescent**

In brief

Programme summary: Throughout 2006-2007, the geopolitical environment in Middle East region continued to be complex and unstable, due to the protracted conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, the Lebanon crisis, and the Iraq crisis; all which deteriorated the humanitarian conditions and increased vulnerability. Under such an environment, the International Federation's Middle East regional programmes continued focusing on strengthening the capacities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies through activating and using the regional thematic networks in order to promote knowledge sharing, coordination and cooperation among the National Societies in the three sub regions - Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf. The health and care programme focused on health promotion and development of preventive approaches of communicable diseases and human resource capacity of the National Societies. The National Societies' focal points and volunteers in the field of HIV and AIDS, psychological support, community based first aid (CBFA) and public health in emergencies received tailor made trainings to enhance their capacity to deliver on the Global Agenda goals of the International Federation. The disaster management programme efforts were directed towards harmonization, standardization, development and use of the disaster management tools in order to enhance the National Societies' response capacities for future emergencies. Focus was given to community based risk reduction (CBRR), vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA), contingency planning and increasing capacities in prevention, preparedness, response and rehabilitation. In the meantime, various regional activities in communication and information - *Al-Ittihad* newsletter, public service announcements, and relationships with the media - along with networking and cooperation, contributed to the promotion of Principles and Values. The capacity development programme shifted its activities to country level support to National Societies, while maintaining a regional focus on priority and cross cutting issues for different programmes and stakeholders, such as gender mainstreaming, legal base and project planning.

In Iran, the construction of schools under the Emergency Appeal no. 25/03 was completed in February 2007 and handed over to the Iranian Ministry of Education (MoE). The International Federation continued to support the Iranian Red Crescent Society (Iranian RC) to build its capacity in disaster response, community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP), psychosocial support and gender.

The prevailing political environment in the Middle East, resulting in increased humanitarian needs, continued to affect the regular capacity building programmes under this Appeal. The externally displaced persons (EDPs) from Iraq to neighbouring countries, mainly Syria and Jordan, also shifted the focus and priorities of donor National Societies to respond to the emerging humanitarian needs rather than support capacity building initiatives and long term development. As a consequence, the response to this 2006-2007 Appeal is low compared to the previous years.

At the time of the initial launch of the Appeal, the total 2006-2007 budget was CHF 5,262,356 (USD 4,706,937 or EUR 3,189,307). During the reporting period, some adjustments were made under the regional programme budgets. In addition, Iran projects were linked to this Appeal in 2007. Thus, the total 2006-2007 budget reached CHF 6,087,857 (USD 5,445,310 or EUR 3,689,610).

Please go to the International Federation's website for operations relevant to the Middle East region during the reporting period – Humanitarian Crisis in the Middle East Emergency Appeal (MDR81001), Middle East: Population Displaced from Iraq Emergency Appeal (MDR81002), Iraq: Response to Humanitarian Crisis (MDRIQ002), and Palestine Red Crescent Society Call for Support (MDRPS001). Specific reporting on 2006-2007 bi-annual programmes in Israel, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen can be found at the Middle East/North Africa section of the International Federation's website as well, along with a separate Appeal and reporting on the planning and management support to the National Societies in North Africa region.

Goal: The programme aims at increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability of populations exposed to natural and man-made hazards, enhancing advocacy on priority humanitarian issues including fighting intolerance, stigma and discrimination and promoting disaster risk reduction in the region through a shared responsibility and maximal cooperation and collaboration among National Societies and stakeholders. The programme also aims to improve the humanitarian services delivered to the most vulnerable by assisting National Societies in the region strengthen and sustain their capacities.

Needs: Total 2006-2007 budget CHF 6,087,857 (USD 5,445,310 or EUR 3,689,610) (out of which 62 per cent covered). [Click here](#) to go directly to the attached financial reports:

[Report 2006](#)

[Report 2007](#)

[Report 2006/2007](#)

No. of people we help: The beneficiaries of the regional programmes were 17 National Societies in three sub-regions. The total number of beneficiaries that benefited from the regional programme activities was approximately 90,000, out of which 35 percent were women. People who attended the training activities are expected to create a multiplier effect by training the staff and volunteers of their National Societies. In Iran, approximately 40,000 people benefited from capacity building activities in the areas of HIV and AIDS, psychological support, CBDP, and by seeing publications like the DVD: *Bam emerges with new looks*, and the pictorial: *Bam on the rise*. The regional capacity programmes in 2008-2009 aim to reach the same number of beneficiaries, with efforts to increase women beneficiaries by 50 percent.

It is estimated that three million television viewers in Jordan saw the road safety public service announcements, out of which 50 percent are thought to be women. Likewise, in Iran, it is estimated that one million newspaper readers read articles on International Federation's reconstruction programme and two million TV viewers saw the TV news on the opening ceremony of special schools built by the International Federation in Bam.

Our partners: The Middle East representation worked in partnership with a number of stakeholders including United Nations agencies like World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Partner National Societies (PNSs), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), media and local organizations, and other representations in the region. It also coordinated with governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Jordan through the host National Society, the Jordan Red Crescent (Jordan RC).

Department for International Development (DfID), Australian Red Cross and government, Norwegian Red Cross and government, Swedish Red Cross and government, Finnish Red Cross, British Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, Capacity Building Fund (CBF), ECHO, Hong Kong Red Cross, Arab General Secretariat, and Singapore Red Cross have been the main contributors to the International Federation Appeal throughout the reporting period.

Current context

The Middle East region is well known for its chronic emergencies associated with deep-rooted conflicts such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and the most recent one in Iraq. In addition, the war on Lebanon in the summer of 2006 is still affecting the country which has not yet recovered from the devastating blow to its civil infrastructure. Apart from conflicts, the region is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, droughts, and these have increasing effects taking into consideration the variation in distribution of wealth between the countries. Health related threats were another concern for the region, with avian influenza appearing in some countries and reporting human fatalities in Egypt and Iraq.

Throughout the reporting period, the International Federation's representation in the Middle East cooperated with its member National Societies to address the impact of man-made and natural disasters and minimize their effects on the population through strengthening the capacities of the National Societies. The priorities were set not only depending on the individual needs of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the region, but also on the collective ones decided during the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Conferences, such as the one held in Marrakech in May 2006, outlining the areas of action for 2006-2007.

However, due to the prevailing complex and unstable political, social and economic environment in MENA region, priorities of some programmes aimed at long term capacity building had to be shifted in order to address emergency situations. The late approval of funding for some programmes like psychosocial support programme (PSP), information/communication, and disaster management; some traditional donors of the regional programmes hesitating to make commitments while the organization was moving towards implementing the new operating model; and the delay in establishing the zone structure and recruiting staff in the core areas; resulted in the need to re-schedule the implementation of some activities.

Progress towards objectives

Health and Care

Objective: To strengthen capacities of the National Societies in the region to address the health needs of identified vulnerable groups with focus on health promotion, disease prevention, psychosocial support, public health priorities, and first aid in the community.

Achievements: The health and care plan was re-examined in view of the emerging humanitarian needs in the region. This situation required scaling up of the preparedness capacity of National Societies to cope with the new emerging crises by increasing the focus on public health in emergencies. Thus, a regional public health in emergencies training took place in March 2007 to establish a regional core group of health professionals with the appropriate knowledge and skills to participate in immediate and post disaster health assessments, and management of priority health interventions focusing on mitigation and response. 21 participants representing nine National Societies and International Federation's Middle East representation benefited from the workshop.

Coordination, networking and knowledge sharing among MENA National Societies have improved. During the reporting period, thematic network meetings (CBFA, HIV/AIDS and psychological support) and the use of the staff on loan model became essential means for National Societies to work together on developing training modules, sharing knowledge and experiences, and maintaining coordination. In addition, documents related to CBFA, psychological support, HIV and AIDS, blood donation and avian influenza were translated into Arabic and shared with the National Societies for use in training and health education. The National Societies also received a CD on the newly developed psychological support training of trainers' Arabic manual as well as four new CBFA training modules (mother and child health, mine awareness, water safety and HIV/AIDS). Similarly, a module on HIV/AIDS was translated and shared with the National Societies' health focal points. An HIV/AIDS public awareness brochure was produced and the 'Come Closer' campaign was translated into Arabic with some cultural adaptations. In addition, the quarterly *Health@MENA* bulletin was published, exchanging information and experience and resources.

The role of MENA National Societies in responding to avian influenza and pandemic preparedness was mapped. Updates have been shared with the International Federation's secretariat. In addition, documents from the International Federation and WHO on avian influenza were shared with the National Societies and country delegations to promote their preparedness and response capacities. The National Societies of Iraq, Syria, Egypt and United Arab Emirates published brochures on this issue and launched public health awareness campaigns.

National Society representatives from Iran, Egypt and Jordan participated in the Global Health and Care Forum in 2007 with support provided for their poster presentations and travel arrangements. Technical support was provided to the National Societies during planned trainings including organizing and financially supporting CBFA training of trainers (ToT) courses for 18 participants from the Jordan RC, 20 participants from the Palestine RC, and 30 participants from Libyan Red Crescent. In addition, efforts were coordinated between Lebanese Red Cross and Palestine RC-Lebanon branch in organizing two CBFA training workshops for 32 participants. CBFA ToT workshops were also organized by Yemen in 2006; and Libya and Jordan in 2007. Gender equity was maintained during the training courses. In the meantime, technical support and the Arabic information package on the World First Aid Day (8 September 2007) was provided to the National Societies who implemented many activities on this occasion including awareness sessions, lectures, training workshops and distribution of first aid kits and leaflets. The volunteers who successfully completed the training replicated the effort and scaled-up the community outreach. The National Societies' comments on the revised "First Aid Policy" were compiled, translated to English, and shared with the health department of the secretariat.

The health and care department of the Middle East representation facilitated an HIV/AIDS workshop for 34 staff and volunteers from the Yemen Red Crescent and 20 volunteers from Lebanese RC. Support was provided to the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent in preparing a plan of action on how to deal and work with people living with HIV.

The Lebanese RC was supported during two awareness campaigns connected to HIV/AIDS and the Moroccan Red Crescent was also assisted in creating communication and promotional materials on

HIV/AIDS, applicable to the local community. These efforts will be scaled up to include the National Societies of Libya and Tunisia.

Coordination was ensured with the National Societies to celebrate the World AIDS Day (1 December 2007), which included activities such as implementation of training workshops, lectures, distribution of flyers and stickers, and festal activities in presence of people living with HIV.

A Regional Conference on PSP was initiated by the International Federation's MENA zone office, supported by the Reference Centre for Psychological Support in Denmark and hosted by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society in Damascus during 7-8 November 2007. The context in which the conference was convened considered both short-term perspective of the immediate suffering of the Iraqi displaced people and the long term need of psychosocial support in the MENA region. The conference was attended by 11 National Societies from MENA zone, five Participating National Societies, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The International Federation was represented by MENA zone office and the representations in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon¹. This was funded by the Middle East: Population Displaced from Iraq Emergency Appeal (MDR81002). Throughout the reporting period, documents published by this centre on planning and implementation of PSP were translated into Arabic and sent to all National Societies in the region, along with the newsletter '*Coping with crisis*'.

In Iran, Iranian RC played a significant role in implementing a five-year national strategic plan for preventing HIV/AIDS (2002 –2007), especially in promoting public awareness, HIV/AIDS education and assisting patients infected with HIV/AIDS. With the financial support from the Australian RC, the National Society conducted three workshops on HIV/AIDS prevention and two workshops on HIV/AIDS harm reduction in Tehran in October-December 2007 to train its trainers who work with youth for HIV prevention activities and to increase Red Crescent staff and volunteers' knowledge on harm reduction. These workshops were attended by a total of 170 participants who have come from the National Society's voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) centres and 30 provincial branches. The training topics covered different aspects of HIV/AIDS prevention, including psycho-social aspects, target group definition, counselling services, harm reduction principles, vulnerability of drug users, peer education, information, education and communication, and the effective ways to work with youth. The workshops which were facilitated by university professors and experts from the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the National Society provided the participants with an opportunity to further deepen their knowledge and skills and share their training experience with each other. Two informative CDs on HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention produced were distributed to the participants. The participants will replicate HIV/AIDS training for target vulnerable groups in their respective provinces.

In addition to the HIV/AIDS workshops, Iranian RC carried out extensive public awareness campaigns through its branches and voluntary counselling and testing centres. Besides, "*Payame-Hela*", a Farsi-language magazine of the National Society, published various articles and stories to raise the public awareness on HIV/AIDS. The National Society is also working with a special target group - wives of HIV/AIDS-infected men - educating them on the ways and means of preventing this disease. With two more HIV/AIDS workshops scheduled for January-February 2008 and the ambitious health and care plan of action for 2008, the National Society's HIV/AIDS activities will enter a new phase of targeting more people with more services and better results.

Considering the specific needs of people living in Bam who are exposed to the psychological stress caused by the slow recovery process and the high unemployment rate, Iranian RC implemented a PSP for 2006-2007 with funding from Danish and Finnish RC. Computer, embroidery and sewing courses were organized in two phases (the first from May 2006 to January 2007 and the second from July to September 2007). In the first phase of the training, a total of 640 people (480 women and 160 men) attended the courses. Each course, lasting for one month, was run by a professional trainer and

¹ Full report on the Conference is available and can be requested from the MENA zone office.

attended by 20 persons. The trainers and Red Crescent volunteers also provided psychological counselling to participants in case of need. In February-March 2007, the National Society and the International Federation reviewed the first phase of the PSP activities in Bam and adjusted the curriculum and content of the training courses to be conducted for the second phase. After thorough preparations for the courses and registration of the participants, Iranian RC organized the second phase of the training, with the participation of 160 people. During these training courses, Red Crescent youth volunteers disseminated the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and the activities of the Iranian RC, which resulted in some of them joining the National Society.

Challenges or Constraints: Some countries as well as their National Societies did not consider HIV/AIDS as a top priority and there was a lack of accurate official information on this topic. Cultural sensitivity continues to hinder implementation of some of the activities in this area. In addition, some National Societies' focal points do not have adequate authority to plan and implement activities. Therefore, more advocacy efforts with National Societies' leadership are needed.

Disaster Management

Objective: To develop well functioning disaster management capacities in MENA National Societies that can promote optimal utilization of human and technical resources to implement integrated programmes.

Achievements: A VCA booklet, sphere trainers manual, and National Intervention Team (NIT) and contingency planning guidelines were produced. The first draft of the VCA booklet containing illustrating drawings has been shared with MENA National Societies' disaster management focal points and members of the disaster management network. The Middle East representation, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Organisation of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies, facilitated a sphere ToT for Arabic speaking National Societies in December 2006. As a follow up to this training, the Middle East representation managed to implement the following activities during 2007:

- Twelve participants representing the National Societies of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Qatar and Egypt submitted their plans of actions to replicate the sphere training in their respective countries. The Middle East representation supported technically and financially the replication of the training in Egypt, Yemen and Syria.
- Seven participants representing the National Societies of Lebanon, Yemen, Qatar and Egypt conducted workshops supervised by an accredited sphere trainer.
- In partnership with the sphere project and the Islamic Relief, the Middle East representation has supported the organization of the 15th Global Sphere ToT in Arabic, which was held in June 2007 and hosted by the Jordan RC.
- In partnership with Islamic Relief, the sphere training package was proofread by staff on loan from National Societies. A basic list of terminology (English-Arabic) was also prepared.

In a forum organized in May 2006, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab RC, the International Federation facilitated a workshop for NIT and Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) on developing team leadership skills. In addition, 12 staff and volunteers from the National Societies participated in a follow up meeting of the regional working group on assessment to unify the assessment tools in the region and provide guidance and training on assessment for the emergency guidelines.

The Middle East representation organized and facilitated NIT drills for the National Societies of Jordan, Syria, Yemen and Qatar. The NIT guidelines developed and prepared at the regional level in line with guidelines developed at the global level were tested. During the course of 2007, the disaster management unit, through services of a consultant, implemented the following activities which were funded by ECHO and DfID global thematic funding:

- Response and contingency planning in Jordan was conducted, linking the contingency planning to the NIT exercise.
- VCA learning by doing was conducted, linked to CBRR activities in Syria, Jordan and Yemen.
- National Societies of Jordan, Syria and Yemen were supported in identifying resources for basic equipment for their National Disaster Response Teams (NDRTs). 17 staff and volunteers in Jordan, 22 in Syria and 28 in Yemen participated and benefited from these activities.

The National Societies of Jordan, Syria and Yemen have incorporated the CBRR in their disaster management plans and requested more interactive engagement through the regional disaster management network to operationalise the MENA coordination framework in this field which was adopted by the 5th MENA Conference in Marrakech May, 2006.

It is obvious that the disaster management support to the National Societies of the Middle East paid off. The response to the floods in Jordan and Yemen and the response of Syrian Arab RC, the Lebanese RC and the Gulf National Societies to the Middle East humanitarian crisis during the hostilities in Lebanon in the summer of 2006 indicated a direct link between the on-going disaster management capacity building initiative and the improving response capacity of the National Societies in the region.

During the reporting period, the National Societies of Jordan, Yemen, Syria and Iran completed the well-prepared National Society self assessment questionnaire and submitted it to the disaster preparedness and policy department at the International Federation's secretariat. In addition, the Middle East representation assisted the MENA zone in organising the MENA Disaster Management Regional Network Meeting held in December 2007 in Amman. The meeting reviewed the disaster management framework and developed an action plan for 2008.

In Iran, Bam reconstruction programme of the International Federation (Appeal No. 25/03) was completed by the end of February 2007 and all schools constructed were handed over to the Iranian MoE on 30 April 2007. A hand over ceremony was held at the Arg-e-Bam Model School Complex in the presence of representatives of the International Federation, MoE, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), diplomatic missions and local authorities to mark the completion of this and other special schools built by the International Federation.

In line with the requirement of the Iranian RC's standard operating procedures and the disaster management training workshops conducted for branch directors, the National Society branches at all levels developed contingency plans based on various disaster scenarios and worked on improving the early warning system through simulation exercises. These efforts paid off when disasters struck the country. In March 2007 when an earthquake measuring 4.8 on the Richter scale hit the Lorestan province, western Iran, the National Society responded timely using its emergency stocks pre-positioned in strategic locations in the country. In early June, when a powerful Cyclone Gonu battered the southern provinces of Iran, the National Society could manage to reduce the impact of the disaster on residents by means of early warning, timely evacuation and effective relief assistance. The Iranian RC replenished in time its emergency stocks distributed to disaster victims with the support of the Hong Kong branch of the Chinese Red Cross and other partners in order to prepare itself for future disasters.

35 deputy managing directors for relief of the Iranian RC's provincial branches and disaster management trainers attended a 4-day ToT workshop, which was organized by the International Federation and the National Society in Tabriz in September 2007 to review the disaster management training workshops conducted so far, standardize the training curriculum and improve future training workshops. To enable the disaster-prone communities to be better prepared for future disasters, the National Society has continued to implement the CBDP project in the Kerman Province with the support of the International Federation and the Finnish RC. Drawing on the experience gained in previous years and based on the progress made so far, the Iran representation of the International Federation, the Iranian RC and the Kerman branch signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in

July 2007 to define their roles and responsibilities in implementing the second phase of the CBDP project. Four communities (Khanuk city in Zarand, Dashtkar village in Bardsir city, Sirch village in Shahdad city and Esfikan district in Bam city) were selected by the National Society and they appointed trainers and focal points. Then they participated in a CBDP induction course which took place in Kerman City in September 2007. They also received CBDP training manuals which were produced in Farsi in October 2007. Several coordination meetings have been held in Tehran and Kerman to run the project in line with the agreed action plan and budget. By December 2007, the four communities formed CBDP committees and various rescue and relief teams and are now working on developing contingency plans, early warning systems, disaster risk reduction plans, public awareness materials, risk mapping, etc.

Two representatives of the Iranian RC participated in the International Conference on Earthquake Preparedness held in Kobe, Japan, in April 2007 and made a presentation on the National Society's contingency plan for a Tehran earthquake. In addition, representatives of the Iranian RC and International Federation attended the 5th International Conference on Seismology and Earthquake Engineering held in Tehran in May 2007 and shared their experiences of earthquake preparedness with other agencies.

Challenges or Constraints: Coordination and cooperation mechanisms in disaster response are still to be developed and National Societies need to make more efforts to make the disaster management framework functional. There is a need for standardized terminologies within the International Federation, including National Societies, as many complaints reflecting the inconsistency in terminologies in the International Federation's publications were received from the National Societies. Although the responsiveness of National Societies to emergencies has considerably improved, the main challenge remains to ensure that the process is based on a strong local level of preparedness to enhance community resilience in a dynamic approach addressing the link between prevention, preparedness, response and rehabilitation.

Some gaps occurred in implementation of programmes, due to the absence of a delegate for a period of time in 2006.

Principles and Values

Objective: To improve information/communication capacity of National Societies through promoted networking and coordination, skill sharing and training and integrated Red Cross Red Crescent Principles and Values with the different programmes and projects in addition to expanding alliances with the media and other partners.

Achievements: The Middle East representation continued to issue its bimonthly newsletter *Al-Ittihad* during 2006 -2007 as a forum for knowledge sharing and promoting the activities of the National Societies in the region. A special edition focusing on the achievements of the Lebanese RC during the Middle East humanitarian crisis from July to August 2006 was issued. The Middle East representation also took on its shoulders the facilitation of the publication of the Arabic version of the *Red Cross Red Crescent magazine*. The support included supervision of the translation from English to Arabic, design, printing and distribution. More than five issues were published during 2006 and 2007. This is a significant contribution to the dissemination of the Red Cross Red Crescent Principles and Values among the Arabic readers. These publications were distributed to the National Societies in MENA region and other Arab countries, International Federation representations, ICRC offices, the media, the diplomatic corps in Jordan and a host of individual addressees.

Furthermore, the Middle East representation launched the *World Disaster Report 2006* by organizing a press conference addressed by the head of the Middle East representation and the president of Jordan RC. In 2007, the report was distributed and shared with the diplomatic missions, UN agencies, government and academic institutions in Jordan as well as the National Societies in the region.

Alliances with the media were explored and expanded through visits and discussions. During the reporting period, the Middle East representation organized visits by the then acting head of MENA department to Al Arabia Channel in Dubai and Al Jazeera Channel in Doha to promote the cooperation between the International Federation and these two Arabic media giants. The outcome of the visit included ongoing discussions related to broadcasting two public service announcements on protecting human dignity during disasters on Al-Jazeera/English channel; a one-day symposium on 'Media and Armed Conflicts' with Al- Jazeera Arabic channel and in coordination with Qatar Red Crescent during which the regional information officer facilitated several sessions on the effects of globalization on humanitarian work which coincided with the 35th session of the General Assembly of the Organisation of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies. The organization showed interest in supporting the information network through establishing information/communications sections in National Societies where they do not exist, and strengthening relations among information officers within National Societies to exchange information and experiences.

The seven public service announcements on road safety, which were produced at the end of 2006, were distributed to all MENA National Societies for use by the national television stations in their respective countries. There were discussions with Al-Jazeera and ATV-Jordan to introduce the announcements and the response was encouraging. More meetings will be held in the future to discuss broadcasting schedules.

Cooperation with other regional programmes included assistance in designing promotional materials such as posters and stickers and sphere materials. Also, a presentation on information and communications during emergencies was presented during the public health in emergencies workshop. In addition, two training workshops were conducted for the National Societies of Libya and Palestine focusing on media related issues. Similar trainings were held in April and May 2006 for the National Societies of Qatar, Bahrain and Egypt.

A number of articles were written and published on the International Federation's public website and stories were fed to some media outlets including press releases, especially on the latest crisis in Lebanon. Support was also provided to the Syrian Arab RC during this crisis in issuing a weekly newsletter, collecting information and organizing campaigns.

The International Federation and the Iranian RC produced and distributed to the donors and the public, a pictorial called *Bam on the Rise*, a DVD film called *Bam emerges with new looks* and a poster, which illustrates their activities in Bam following the tragic earthquake of 26 December 2003. The International Federation's reconstruction programme was well covered by the Iranian media, including TVs and newspapers.

In Iran, the Iranian RC has made tireless efforts to integrate cross-cutting issues such as gender, non-discrimination and protection of human dignity in various training workshops, meetings and public awareness campaigns. Through its project for increasing women's role in the Red Crescent activities, the National Society has championed for gender equity not only in the National Society but also in the society as a whole. It has strived to ensure that gender differences are taken into account and dealt with in relation to the core Red Cross Red Crescent programmes. It worked to help that both men and women have an equal opportunity to benefit from all Red Cross Red Crescent programmes according to their different needs and with the input and equal participation of men and women at all levels within the National Society.

The implementation of the projects for psycho-social support and HIV/AIDS prevention has helped the Iranian RC to advocate for the rights of people who are under psychological stress or suffering from stigma and social discrimination and provide them with necessary assistance.

Challenges or Constraints: There is still a long way to go before networking reaches its full capacity in the region. There is also room for improving National Society participation in *Al-Ittihad* newsletter.

Capacity Development

Objective: To improve services of MENA National Societies to the most vulnerable based on the characteristics of well functioning National Societies and enhance capacities in the areas of strategic and operational planning, integrity and accountability, resource mobilization and development, youth, volunteers and gender.

Achievements: The capacity development programme supported the MENA National Societies under three main themes: youth and volunteers' development, leadership and management development and gender mainstreaming. Other activities in this area addressed the legal base reform and governance and management support. Most of the activities were tailored to country based needs and complemented the regional youth and volunteers and gender networks.

In July 2007, the Middle East representation, in collaboration with the International Federation's Legal Base Reform Centre hosted by the Danish RC and the International Federation's governance support unit, organized and conducted a regional forum on legal base reform for the National Societies of the Middle East and the Gulf attended by nine National Societies from Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, Bahrain, Yemen, Palestine, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. The forum discussed the importance of the legal base reform, integrity and accountability of the National Societies and other organizational issues related to the statutes of the National Societies emphasizing the importance of updating the statutes and the separation between governance and management.

The International Federation's Middle East representation assisted the Syrian Arab RC in its efforts to strengthen its local governance at branch level and in identifying the role and responsibilities of the headquarters and the branches. This was part of an evaluation process following the major role the National Society played during the operation of the Middle East humanitarian crisis to draw the lessons learned at the organizational level. In addition, Qatar RC was assisted in reviewing its structure, policies and procedures, in addition to transferring knowledge from other National Societies in addressing restructuring issues.

Tailor made technical support to the Iraqi Red Crescent in programme planning and reporting continued through 2007. The support targeted the 18 branch directors and technical programme managers at the national headquarters. Technical support was also provided to the project planning team in the youth department of the Lebanese RC, the United Arab Emirates RC, Syrian Arab RC and Yemen RC. This focused on long term planning for the youth local centres and the volunteers' support, management and retention. At the regional level, technical assistance and coaching was provided to MENA Youth Coordinating Committee to activate the MENA youth network. The preparatory meeting for the committee was conducted in Amman in January 2007 in order to prepare for the second MENA youth network meeting which was held in Yemen in June 2007. The meeting identified the youth priorities in the region, concluded the plan of action and the terms of reference for the newly elected committee. At present, the youth represent 90 percent of the NS volunteers' base. The National Societies of the region started to give due attention to the representation of the youth volunteers at governance level. For example, nine National Societies from the region had youth representation in their delegations to the 5th MENA Conference in Marrakech in May 2006 and the 7th Asia Pacific Conference in Singapore in November 2006. Although less number of youth participated in the International Federation's General Assembly and the International Conference in Geneva in November 2007, MENA National Societies are still taking the lead in the youth representation at regional and global forums.

The organizational development unit of the Middle East representation met the Iranian RC's gender focal point in March 2007 to discuss the challenges related to the regional gender website and the mechanisms to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination in gender mainstreaming and integrating it in the overall organizational development activities. Two Iranian RC gender representatives visited the National Societies of Qatar and Kuwait in July and discussed various gender-related issues of common concern and ways of improving cooperation in this field. In addition, gender focal points of the Middle East National Societies met for three days in May 2007 in a training forum to enhance their capacities in gender programming and mainstreaming and to review the individual plans and challenges of each National Society. A preliminary gender profile was established

after collecting gender disaggregated data on the National Societies headquarters and branches. This database will continue to be updated on a regular basis. As a result of the International Federation's gender equity policy promoted through the network female volunteers, representation in some National Societies constituted 40-60 percent of the volunteers' base. Syrian Arab RC adopted a gender balancing policy for the election to the leadership positions, i.e. if the president is a man, then the vice-president is a woman, or vice versa. However, more advocacy efforts need to be done in the Gulf countries to promote International Federation's gender policy and mainstreaming.

Arabic version of the gender manual printed in Amman has been distributed to all the National Societies in the region. The *MENA Gender Review Report*, analyzing the evolution and functioning of the MENA gender network and summarizing the experiences of the Iranian RC as a focal point in the implementation of gender (pilot) projects was distributed to all the National Societies in the region

The impact review of the regional capacity development programme commissioned in 2006 indicated that the leadership of MENA National Societies' awareness about the importance of strategic planning, review and amendments of the National Society statutes and strengthening of the institutional structures have increased. Linked to this, the leadership training programme attracted more participants in 2006.

In cooperation with the ICRC delegation in Amman, the organizational development unit provided technical assistance and facilitated two training workshops for the Jordan RC staff and volunteers. The first one was on project planning for the branch management and the second one was on the *Seville Agreement* and its *Supplementary Measures* for the leadership of the components of the Movement in Jordan. In addition, sixteen participants (with equal female-male ratio of participation) from the National Societies of Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, were trained as trainers on the project planning process (PPP).

As a MENA focal point for the implementation of the *Seville Agreement* and its *Supplementary Measures*, the Iranian RC hosted a consultation meeting in Tehran in April in cooperation with International Federation and ICRC. 30 participants from the International Federation, ICRC and National Societies of Iran, Qatar, Sudan, Pakistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Egypt attended the meeting to discuss monitoring of the implementation of the agreement.

In addition, Iranian RC completed the three-year project for increasing women's role in the Red Crescent activities which was funded by the Capacity Building Fund (CBF). This project has helped the National Society to ensure increased membership and participation of women in the Red Crescent activities in five disaster-prone provinces of Kerman, Sistan-Baluchestan, Khorasane-Razzavi, Khorasane-Shomali and Khorasane-Jonoubi and to strengthen the role and capacity of the women's affairs department of the National Society. Through the publication and distribution of various gender public awareness materials, the National Society managed to draw the attention of its staff and volunteers and the general public to the gender issues and the promotion of gender balance and mainstreaming in their activities.

Two groups of Iranian RC's senior managers comprising 15 persons each, made study visits to the secretariat of the International Federation and the ICRC headquarters in Geneva respectively in May and October 2007. The meetings, presentations and visits they had in Geneva proved to be useful and informative and enabled them to have a better understanding of the strategies, priorities and current issues of the two institutions. A similar visit was organized in 2006.

Challenges or Constraints: The level of using information and communication technology within the National Societies varies widely, including access to internet and use of email, which continued to cause delays in implementation of activities. In addition, more support is needed to develop country and region based solutions for youth/volunteers recruitment and their development, and National Societies' leadership need to be encouraged to support the regional networks.

Some gaps occurred in implementation of programmes, due to the absence of a delegate for a period of time in 2006.

Working in partnership

Objective: Through well structured regional cooperation frameworks, to increase and diversify the number of partners of the National Societies in the region who are aware of, and sensitive to, the Red Cross Red Crescent priorities that address the needs of the vulnerable people in a coordinated manner.

Achievements: The Middle East representation facilitated and coordinated support to the regional networks in health and care, disaster management, youth, gender, communication and information to play their role in enhancing the capacities of National Societies and use the forums for knowledge sharing and exchange of experience.

A regional planning meeting was held in Amman to introduce the new zone office structure, new operating model, the Global Agenda and discuss the plans for 2008-2009. Country and regional representations presented their plan outlines, budget estimates and future direction.

To enhance the regional cooperation framework, the Middle East representation renewed its contacts with UNICEF and WHO to speed up the process of operationalizing the global agreements between the two UN agencies and the International Federation through the implementation of a joint community based health programme in Yemen. The final draft of the project proposal was shared with the partners for final approval of their commitment. Collaboration with the two agencies was further enhanced through joint training on public health in emergencies during a workshop organized by the Middle East representation. Similar cooperation is maintained with Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF).

The International Federation's visibility at regional forums was maintained through the participation of the head of the Middle East representation in the Global Workshop on IDPs organized by UNICEF during 4-6 September, 2007 at Dead Sea, Jordan. He made a presentation and answered questions on how the humanitarian reform changed the way International Federation responds in IDP situations. He also represented the International Federation in the 8th meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention during 18-22 November, 2007. He delivered a statement under the agenda item "assisting the victims" and submitted a written statement as contribution to the discussion under the agenda item "general exchange of views". He also attended the Regional Conference on the Iraqi Displaced in Neighbouring Countries at the level of experts during 26-27 July, 2007 which was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Jordan and co-chaired by Jordan and Iraq. The meeting was attended by the countries of Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, the Arab League, the UN system, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and the main donors from USA, UK, Japan, Canada, Turkey, Iran, the Russian Federation, the European Union, ECHO, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as observers. The visibility efforts of 2007 were a continuation of the ones in 2006, which included the head of the Middle East representation attending the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Organisation of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies held in Damascus on 30 July, and its follow-up meeting in Beirut on 18 September, 2006.

The head of zone attended the high level ministerial consultation to address the urgent health and care needs of displaced Iraqis in neighbouring countries during 29-30 July 2007, organized by WHO and hosted by Syria. In addition, regular contacts and meetings were maintained with ICRC country delegation in Jordan to harmonize and coordinate support to the Jordan RC. Similar contacts were made with ICRC Syria delegation to harmonize the disaster management support to Syrian Arab RC.

Support to bilateral PNSs in the region was maintained through regular review of bilateral interventions and facilitation of services to enable partners to implement their planned activities. The cooperation and coordination with the Organisation of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies was strengthened. The Middle East representation participated in the 35th session of the General

Assembly of the organization held in Doha, Qatar in February 2007 and presented a report on International Federation activities in the region during 2006.

Contacts with donor governments and development agencies through their diplomatic missions accredited to Jordan were maintained. The contacts were increased during the launch of the Emergency Appeals for Iraq and the externally displaced Iraqis in Jordan and Syria to promote the two appeals and update the missions on the planned activities of the International Federation in the region. Continuous contact and coordination with the French RC, German RC, Danish RC, Norwegian RC and Swedish RC was maintained to facilitate the services provided to the externally displaced Iraqis in Jordan and Syria.

In Iran, the Iranian RC and the International Federation worked in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Office (ISDR) in order to ensure that the implementation of the CBDP project reaches the desired outcome.

The construction of the Arg-e-Bam Model School Complex, a joint project of the Iranian RC, International Federation and UNESCO was completed by the end of February 2007. A jointly organized inauguration ceremony in Bam on 30 April saw representatives of donor governments, international organizations and Iranian authorities present together with students, teachers and parents.

Throughout the implementation of the Bam reconstruction programme, the National Society and the International Federation worked closely with the MoE, MoH, local authorities and the international organizations that were involved in the rehabilitation projects in Bam. In addition, the Iranian RC enhanced its cooperation with sister National Societies in the region in the fields of gender, health, youth and disaster management.

The head of the International Federation's Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) in Dubai visited the Iranian RC to acquaint himself with the latter's capacities in disaster response and logistical support and discussed concrete ways of cooperation with the National Society in assisting regional relief operations. With the support of the International Federation representation in Iran, the National Society made in-kind donations of family tents, blankets and other relief items to the National Societies of Iraq, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nicaragua to assist them in their relief operations.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The Middle East representation is a focal point to coordinate the International Federation support to the National Societies in the region in line with *Strategy 2010*, Global Agenda goals and the MENA department strategy for 2006-2009. The regional programmes contributed indirectly to the achievement of the Global Agenda goals and by extension the Millennium Development Goals by providing opportunities for information sharing and awareness raising that led to improving people's lives and reducing poverty. Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers provided free services without discrimination to vulnerable people aiming at reducing deaths, injuries, illnesses and impact from disasters and diseases. Through the volunteers' activities, communities are empowered with information that will raise awareness, thus leading to protection of lives and reduction of risks in the future.

All programme activities aim at giving equal opportunities to men and women. Gender sensitization sessions became an integral part of the thematic network meetings to improve response to the problems caused by inequality and build the capacity of National Societies in gender analysis and use of disaggregated data in planning, programming and reporting.

Knowledge sharing among National Societies provided awareness to promote the Code of Conduct, sphere standards, and standardization of volunteer recruitment policy in the National

Societies programmes. Messages and information disseminated through the *Al-Ittihad*, *Red Cross Red Crescent magazine* and website stories focus on humanitarian values, Code of Conduct and sphere standards and accountability, thus bringing good knowledge on disaster management to people.

The scaling up of community based activities addressing cross cutting issues in health, disaster management, capacity development and humanitarian values contributed to increasing community resilience to disasters. For example, the CBFA implementation at country level focused on the health needs of the most vulnerable and encouraged the National Societies to promote community participation and ownership.

The implementation of the disaster management programme at regional and country level contributed to enhancing the skills of the National Societies' volunteers and staff through using tools such as ToT on sphere standards aiming at improving the quality of disaster response, thus contributing to long term impact of the programmes.

Looking ahead

Following the establishment of the MENA zone, the function and mandate of the Middle East representation is reviewed and will be focusing on the implementation of the programmes at country level in addition to administrative and logistical support to Iraq and Palestine operations plus providing administrative assistance to the zone management. Therefore, the priorities in 2008-2009 will include intensified focus on community based approaches in order to contribute to achieving the Global Agenda goals, particularly in the health and care and disaster management programmes. The focus will be on providing tailor made support to the National Societies to ensure continuity of established activities and inspire innovation through a series of high level strategic dialogues. Alliances with the media will be expanded and coordination and collaboration with various partners, National Societies and the ICRC, will increase.

How we work	
<p>All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering quality and accountable assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at http://www.ifrc.org</p>	
<p>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".</p>	<p>Global Agenda Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters. • Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies. • Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability. • Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.
Contact information	
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