

Programme Update



India

Appeal No. MAAIN001

28 August 2008

This report covers the period 01/01/08 to 30/06/08.



A community in Orissa being trained in first-aid and monsoon preparedness by the Orissa state branch of the Indian Red Cross Society in April 2008. (Photo: International Federation)

In brief

Programme purpose:

The overall purpose of the disaster management (DM) programme aligns with the Global Agenda goal 1, that is, to strengthen the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) capacity in disaster preparedness and disaster response and to enhance cooperation with the government and other stakeholders.

The overall purpose of the health and care programme aligns with the Global Agenda goal 2, which is, to improve the IRCS capacity in planning, to raise awareness on the preventive health needs and by responding to public health emergencies, including HIV/AIDS, through prevention, care and support by strengthening the Red Cross Volunteer (RCV) network.

The organisational development (OD) programme aligns with the Global Agenda goal 3; to focus on strengthening the systems and structures so that IRCS has improved capacity to provide effective services to reduce suffering of the vulnerable.

The humanitarian values programme is align to the Global Agenda goal 4; to promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and to reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Programme summary:

During the reporting period, the country witnessed quite a few emergencies including Avian Influenza (West Bengal) and serial bomb blasts (Rajasthan, Gujarat and Karnataka). In January

2008, avian influenza (Bird Flu) was reported in West Bengal. The state had faced a similar situation in 2007 so the state branch responded in a coordinated manner. The public health in emergency (PHiE) training curriculum of the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) has been well received by other agencies, including the United Nations. In January 2008, the National Society finished the first phase of PHiE training which was initiated in 2006. The HIV programme was implemented as planned with a good implementation rate and earlier this year the mid-term evaluation was carried out by Swedish Red Cross for all the three countries (Bangladesh, India and Nepal). The evaluation supported the programme run by IRCS and provided "A" grading for it. Further the HIV Consortium also met during the reporting period with the eight partners and reviewed the current HIV intervention strategy of the IRCS.

Supported by the Federation, the National Society made efforts to adopt the integrated programming approach (IPA) for its programmes in 2008. A pilot project has been initiated in Uttarakhand state branch, which is a disaster prone area. A joint assessment was undertaken by organisational development (OD) and disaster management (DM) programmes to identify the needs of the branch and orient them on integrated planning through the IPA approach. Furthermore, the assessment was aimed to formulating future steps to be taken by the branch including IPA programme design.

The OD programme supported the IPA approach in programming along with taking up important issues such as the National Society development plan (NSDP) and volunteer management. Finance development has gained momentum with a taskforce formed (National Society and the International Federation) to implement the financial software for enabling good financial reporting. During the reporting period the software was purchased and a plan of action for implementation is being drafted. On the communication front, the draft communication strategy was shared with International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and has received a few comments, which are being looked into by a sub-group (National Society, International Federation and the ICRC). Under PMER (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting) a PPP¹ training was organised for the National Society in May 2008 to facilitate the 2009/10 planning process. The training was attended by the programme managers of the National Society, partner national societies (PNSs) and the International Federation.

In 2008 the IRCS elevated its humanitarian values (HV) programme as a separate programme with a dedicated focal point in the national headquarters and the Federation. The National Society aligned its HV programme with Global Agenda goal 4 and wanted the local issues to be represented through this platform. In this regards issues such as female foeticide and gender have been given attention by the National Society along with gender equity issues.

Financial situation: The 2008 budget has been revised slightly down to CHF 3,349,274 (USD 3.35 million or EUR 2.2 million), to reflect more accurately the actual needs. With this revision, the appeal is now covered at 101 percent. The overall expenditure against the budget was 24.5 percent. [Click here to go directly to the attached financial report](#)

No. of people we help: Approximately 93,000 people benefited from IRCS programmes.

Our partners: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, National AIDS Control Organization of India, UN agencies (United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF and the World Health Organization) are the main partners of the IRCS outside of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. In country, the National Society has Red Cross partners like American Red Cross, British Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, German Red Cross, Hong Kong branch of the Red Cross Society of China, Italian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross and ICRC.

¹ PPP: Project planning process

Context

The reporting period witnessed the National Society responding to various calamities, which were either the civil disturbances including serial blasts in Rajasthan, Karnataka and Gujarat or the Bird Flu in West Bengal.

The Ministry of Home Affairs also highlighted rise in the naxal violence as a serious threat to internal security. Many states have been facing naxal violence in the country including Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Chhattisgarh. During 2007 floods the Indian Red Cross Society was the only humanitarian organisation serving in the state of Chhattisgarh which has allowed providing relief to the affected communities by the authorities. Another major security crisis has been the serial blasts which killed over 60 people in the north Indian city of Jaipur, almost 20 people in Ahmedabad and two in Bangalore.

In the health sector the country witnessed another round of Bird flu outbreak. This was reported from the eastern state of West Bengal, in which 19 districts were infected with the highly pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza. No other state has reported any human cases in the country.

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) volunteers and staff of West Bengal worked round the clock to disseminate information about the Avian Influenza in the affected areas, whilst the authorities culled 2.8 million birds during this round. This is not the first time that the IRCS has responded to an Avian Influenza outbreak. In 2006 as well, the Red Cross volunteers and staff distributed more than half a million information brochures in various local languages around the country. This was undertaken in response to a similar outbreak in a few districts of Maharashtra state.

The IRCS celebrated the World Red Cross Day on 8 May, by pledging to raise awareness on climate change and its human consequences in coming years. To mark the occasion a seminar was organised on the topic of “working together to combat climate change”. The Red Cross celebrations got wide media coverage throughout the country.

Progress towards Outcomes

Disaster management:

Programme component	Component outcome
1. Disaster preparedness/ disaster response capacity building	IRCS has improved capacity for disaster preparedness and disaster response in the areas of human resources, infrastructure and institutional systems
2. Community disaster preparedness awareness	There is increased community awareness on disaster preparedness and climate change in the targeted states
3. Disaster risk management knowledge sharing	Established coordination, knowledge sharing and networking with other stakeholders in the field of disaster risk management.
4. Renovation and construction of allied facilities in four regional warehouses	Logistical and warehouse management capacity of IRCS is strengthened.

Achievements:

Expected Outcome 1: DM manager joined the Federation country office in the beginning of June. A draft DM policy for IRCS has been drafted with the help of a consultant. The National Society has also been assisted to develop a concept note on the draft contingency plan for the country. Furthermore a national level workshop took place from 10 till 13 June to develop the contingency plan for the country. During this workshop all the states with DM programmes

participated and developed a contingency plan for their state-branches, and subsequently a national level contingency plan for the National Society will be developed.

During civil disturbances in the Nandigram district of the West Bengal state, the state-branch immediately dispatched relief supplies and the state DM coordinator was stationed in the district for a week to oversee the relief operation. The IRCS had also organised medical camps for the injured.

The country saw early monsoons this year and subsequent rounds of flooding with almost 10 million people affected and 1,385 lives lost. The IRCS has been vigilant on the flood situation and has maintained regular contact with the affected branches; further weekly updates were shared by National Society on the floods within and outside the Movement. The Federation country office was creating daily flood bulletins and shared with the National Society. The IRCS also called for an India Floods Preparedness and Coordination meeting with external stakeholders and including the PNSs and the Federation. The aim was to share the experiences and to map out each others' flood response activities.

Under the IPA approach the DM team (National Society and the Federation) had taken up the state of Uttarakhand as a pilot project. The IRCS DP coordinator along with OD counterparts visited the state and discussed with the state-branch staff on how the IRCS national headquarters can assist them in putting together an overall DM intervention and response system. This includes a fully equipped DM centre and a DM coordinator to man it along with the equipment and the training component. The state-branch was further engaged in a detailed discussion on the DM action plan preparation in which, the technical aspects, time frame, basic concept and minimum activities were mentioned. Similarly as reported under OD this visit was used to orient the branch on the key issues of branch development and further to develop a road map for the branch to implement the IPA approach. The major achievement of this IPA approach has been to strike a right balance of DM and OD support in the state and accordingly has also taken up recruitment of a DM coordinator for the state.

The IRCS DP officer along with the Federation DM focal point attended the Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA) training by learning by doing methodology. This VCA was focused on urban settings, this training contributed to the Emergency Earthquake preparedness and response programme of Bangladesh. Further the IRCS DM team members have been participating in the disaster management working group meeting (DMWG), which has helped them to streamline their DM activities in line with regional and global goals.

The IRCS has been progressing well on the Barclays Project. After some delays, the National Society is moving forward with all the components of the project including the procurement of the water and sanitation equipment, the national disaster response team training (which is scheduled in December 2008) and the first of its kind emergency assessment training (it is scheduled for October 2008). Another component of the project is to create national level water and sanitation team, the training for this is scheduled in September 2008.

Expected Outcome 2: Lesson plans have been put in place for the community-based disaster management training in June for the West Bengal state-branch by the state DM coordinator and the volunteers. The state disaster management centre also produced sub-district maps after a fact sheet and these are currently being displayed in the DM centre of the West Bengal state-branch.

In order to increase the exposure of the Bihar state-branch to its various stakeholders, the branch has come out with a newsletter, which was formally launched and widely circulated.

In Orissa the sessions on community planning continued with the DM plan being updated for the following districts: Malkangiri, Nuapada, Bolangir, Jajpur and Jagatsinghpur. The state-branch also produced generic IEC² material on the Red Cross.

Expected Outcome 3: The DP supervisor of the 24 Parganas district of the West Bengal have formulated a DM plan for the Hasnabad block consisting of 40 village blocks for the ongoing disaster management programme of the government. Further to this the Red Cross volunteers have also carried out contingency planning for the government run projects in a few programme blocks and trained the community on contingency planning through this process.

A vulnerability capacity assessment (VCA) exercise was also carried out for developing disaster response mapping in the government programme blocks for the polio vaccination drive. The Red Cross volunteers in the state have played a vital role in the government run pulse polio programme.

The West Bengal state-branch also played host to a South Korean University exposure visit where the students visited the state and the Red Cross activities.

The West Bengal state branch also liaised with the BBC³ World Service Trust in organising a pre-training discussion on the topic "work with media regarding DM". The disaster preparedness (DP) supervisors of the North 24 Parganas and the Murshidabad attended this discussion along with few volunteers.

The Federation Head of Office for India and the DM manager attended the Sphere Management Committee meeting. During the meeting the Federation shared the National Society activities and took note of the ongoing Sphere initiatives and had discussions with the committee members as to how can the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement contribute in it. The DM manager also attended the disaster risk reduction (DRR) DFID⁴ programme Final Evaluation workshop in Johannesburg; this gave a good opportunity for the Federation DM manager to learn about the new ongoing projects and also to share National Society activities.

A case study has been developed on the states of Assam and Orissa to showcase how these two branches have developed their DM capacity by mobilising local resources. The case study is awaiting IRCS Secretary General's approval.

Expected Outcome 4: The DM manager is currently the focal point for construction project after the construction manager resigned in February 2008. The Federation Head of India office visited the Rajkot district warehouse in state of Gujarat to review the progress of the construction activities. Similarly another monitoring visit was undertaken to Arrakkonam warehouse near Chennai (Tamil Nadu) and to the Salt lake warehouse in Kolkata (West Bengal). The latter two warehouses are regional and are under the direct management of the national headquarters. The construction of the Arrakkonam warehouse has been completed and the National Society is in the process of issuing a completing certificate.

The progress is good in Rajkot and Arakkonam but very slow in Salt Lake; it is due to the lack of commitment by the consultant, and so the National Society is in the process of re-tendering. These visits have added value to the management and technical expertise of the IRCS in reviewing construction related projects.

The budget has been revised for DM as quite a few projects which were supposed to finish in 2007 have been carried forward to 2008.

² IEC: Information, Education and Communication material

³ BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

⁴ DFID: Department for International Development

Constraints or Challenges:

The major constraint during the reporting period was the absence of a DM unit in the Federation India Office, which was a substantial reason for activities not to be carried out as planned. But efforts have been made to fulfil the commitments as the Federation country office now has a DM manager and the new Head of India office. With regular dialogues between the National Society and the Federation DM counterpart the activities have been rescheduled under Barclays funding.

The budget for the current year was presented to the National Society in January 2008 but was only finalized in early May. Nonetheless, the activities are now on the move and are being implemented at a steady pace.

Health and care:

Programme component	Component outcome
1. Public health in emergencies	Strengthen institutional capacity for preparedness and response capacity of staff and volunteers in public health in emergencies (PHiE)
2. Red Cross volunteers	Strengthen the RCV network to prepare and respond to public health emergencies
3. HIV/AIDS	Improve awareness on basic knowledge of HIV and AIDS and quality of life of people living with HIV (PLHIV)

Achievements:

Expected Outcome 1: The PHiE training cycle which was initiated in 2006 with a national level workshop was completed with the district level workshop conducted in January 2008 in Maharashtra. A total of 27 participants from six districts were trained. This PHiE training has been of utmost importance in preparing medical practitioners for emergencies either in disasters, civil disturbances or epidemic. For example, during the floods in the state of Maharashtra during the reporting period, a PHiE trained staff member was sent to assess the situation in flood-affected areas. Similarly, following a cholera outbreak during the floods in Orissa, a PHiE trained medical practitioner accompanied an assessment team to provide required services in the affected areas.

In January 2008, 14 participants from four previously affected or potentially affected IRCS state-branches were sensitised on bird flu through a national level advocacy meeting called by the national headquarters on potential PHiE situation. During this meeting the medical practitioners were given an opportunity to share their previous experiences and concerns. After this sensitisation, a state level workshop was also organised in Manipur wherein 40 participants were trained on PHiE. During the outbreak of bird flu, teams of the IRCS volunteers worked round the clock to raise community awareness in the affected district of Murshidabad in West Bengal. The IEC material on Avian Influenza developed with Federation support was utilised to raise community awareness on the issue. About 15,000 community members in 110 villages were reached by the awareness campaigns. A similar effort was undertaken by the National Society in 2006 and 2007 during the Avian Influenza outbreaks. The IRCS is prepared to respond to Avian Influenza by focusing on raising awareness through sharing information in the community with the help of its network of branches and volunteers.

Expected Outcome 2: Two state level workshops have been completed for the Red Cross Volunteer (RCV) leaders under the HIV programme states of Maharashtra (March 2008) and Andhra Pradesh (May 2008). A total of 36 trainers (RCV leaders) from six districts were trained in these two workshops. The participants were selected strategically to strengthen the volunteer network and support for the community outreach activities under the project. These RCV leaders will train the district level volunteers. After the successful completion of state level workshops, six district-level trainings for community level RCVs were organised in Maharashtra

and Andhra Pradesh. A total of 144 volunteers attended the same. These RCV will help in awareness raising interventions and thus increasing the knowledge of the local people in the communities on good hygiene and sanitation practices.

Expected Outcome 3: As planned, the Red Cross HIV/AIDS consortium in India met for a semi-annual consortium meeting in April 2008 in Delhi. The meeting was organised by the National Society to review the achievements and discuss the expansion plans. The outcomes of the mid-term evaluation of the HIV/AIDS project were also shared with the consortium members and these findings proved that the programme was moving in the right direction. All the eight partners, along with the representatives from ICRC and partner national societies⁵ expressed satisfaction on the progress made and suggested that efforts should continue in scaling-up this programme and to achieve better results. As part of the consortium meeting, the existing IRCS HIV strategy from 2005-08 was revised for 2009-12. Though, the strategy is still a draft, but the National Society is coordinating with other consortium members to finalise it.

Danish Red Cross, one of the consortium partners has made an informal commitment for the ongoing Federation supported HIV and AIDS programme in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

The youth peer education (YPE) project which targets the youth in schools and colleges, has been developed to encourage the youth in enhancing the “positive peer support” in discussing HIV and related health issues. The programme is presently being implemented in 280 institutions across the two states. Total of 30 trainings were conducted with peer educators for disseminating knowledge on HIV and AIDS prevention encourages them to counsel and provide life skills to other peer members. To date, almost 1,200 peer educators have been trained in 122 institutions. The sensitization of the heads of the institutions and teachers were also done for their better cooperation. The project has been achieving its targets regularly.

The HIV programme is working to ensure that people living with HIV (PLHIV) have access to information, care and nutritional support. The care and support initiative in Thambaram hospital in Chennai, Tamil Nadu provides nutritious mid-day meal and hygiene kits to PLHIVs. A total of 54,714 mid-day meals and 2,000 hygiene kits were provided to PLHIVs during the reporting period. Another element of this project is to provide counseling support and to raise awareness through discussions/orientations on how to combat stigma and discrimination. Discussions and orientations were held for the PLHIV and their families to improve their awareness and to help them cope better with their positive status. A total of 72 discussions were held with PLHIV and their families; they were counseled on how to cope better with their positive status. These activities are in-line with targets as the programme has a grip on the staff and beneficiaries.

The community care centre initiative implemented at Dharmapuri district in Tamil Nadu aims to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS among children and their HIV-positive parents through comprehensive care. This includes informal education and psychosocial support to address stigma. Around 18 children with HIV-positive parents attend community care centre and receive nutritious food, pre-school education and counseling.

Promotion of voluntary non-remunerated blood donation through this project has resulted in collection of 4,566 units of blood during the reporting period. In order to increase the promotion of voluntary non-remunerated blood donation, various activities were organised including seminars and the IEC material was distributed during the World Health and Blood Donor’s Days. This has resulted in collection of 4,971 units of blood during the reporting period in two YPE programme states.

Three participants including national level HIV coordinator and two state HIV coordinators participated in a training programme on care and support for PLHIV organised in Bangladesh in

⁵ American Red Cross and Italian Red Cross

April 2008. As a follow-up of the training in Bangladesh, the state coordinator of Maharashtra state-branch organised a similar training where 16 programme staff participated.

Constraints or Challenges:

Overall programme implementation was slow due to procedural and administrative delays between IRCS national headquarters and branches. As the programme is similar to the Youth Peer Education programme it was decided by the State branch to shift the HIV project to three new districts with high HIV prevalence to avoid duplication with effect from 1 April 2008. This decision caused a temporary stoppage of the activities. But after the national headquarters approval, the activities have been started in three new districts (Tiruchirapalli, Perambalur and Villupuram).

Although narrative reporting has become more regular, there are still delays and deadlines are often missed. Reporting needs further strengthening, with better coordination and monitoring mechanisms between national headquarters, state and district branches. Technical trainings in various aspects are required for the programme personnel for further improving their expertise in the areas like project planning, monitoring and evaluation and resource mobilization. The financial reporting is delayed quite often which again adversely affects the release of working advance, leading to slow implementation.

Organisational Development

Programme component	Component outcome
1. Organizational and leadership development	IRCS’s capacity to mobilize, organize and manage local resources is strengthened at the national and branch levels
2. Finance development	A modernized financial management system at NHQ and ‘selected’ branches is put in place
3. Internal communications development	IRCS internal communication management and branch networking system is strengthened
4. External relations and resource mobilization	IRCS relations with external partners and media is strengthened
5. Volunteer development	IRCS has well-managed volunteer management systems

Achievements:

Expected Outcome 1: The National Strategic Development plan 2008/11 is in the last phase of development process.

Branch development workshop for the Madhya Pradesh state-branch has been conducted to strengthen the existing branch structures and procedures. Other initiatives under the Madhya Pradesh branch development process are provisioning for infrastructure, vehicle and financial support for some staff at the branches.



The assessment team from national headquarters discussing with the Uttarakhand state-branch on the implementation of the IPA approach. (Photo: International Federation)

The most significant achievement of OD programme during the reporting period was to lead the initiative of integrated programme approach (IPA) for planning. To that effect a pilot project was initiated in the state-branch of Uttarakhand. The OD department had discussions with DM on how much initial support would be required to start the DM activities in the state. Presently the branch has good recruitment set-up, the financial regulations are in place but there is a need for overall human resource (HR) support for the state-branch in order to develop its systems, for which support is provided.

The outcomes of this unique IPA initiative are:

- To hire a DM coordinator and a branch development officer for the state.
- The state-branch is now equipped with the know-how of developing a programme plan as per the needs of the state and also is in a position to report back as the work advances.

Furthermore, a PPP training was initiated for IRCS, the Federation and PNSs in preparation for the 2009/10 planning process. This was based on the PMER needs assessment carried out by the focal point in the National Society and the Federation delegation. The outcomes of the workshop have been:

- Clear understanding of the formulation of objectives for project planning.
- Importance of participatory processes in analyzing of problems and planning.
- Establishing a log-frame for project plan for 2009/10 through hands-on training.

Additionally, the Federation PMER focal point attended the PMER network meeting in Kathmandu, which focused on the changing roles of the PMER focal points and also on the shifting modalities at different levels. The 2009/10 planning was carried out in close consultation with the National Society and PNSs. The draft South Asia PMER strategy was shared with the Federation programme managers to gather their feedback.

In line with the on-going support to the Gujarat state branch after the Gujarat earthquake, the Federation delegation undertook a final evaluation visit. The main objective of the evaluation visit was to do a SWOT⁶ analysis and to assess the stability of the state-branch. The outcome of the SWOT analysis was that with considerable financial and technical support and guidance from the IRCS national headquarters since 2001 and till 2007, the Gujarat state branch and its grass root units are performing well and will be self-sustainable in due course of time.

Follow-up visits for branch development and review of OD activities were undertaken in the state branch of Bihar by the IRCS OD personnel and the Secretary General in Punjab and Haryana. The objective of these visits was to keep a consistent follow-up on the progress of activities planned by these branches, and to learn about the constraints faced by them to indentify future Federation support.

Throughout the country the National Society observed the Red Cross Day by raising awareness among the general public on climate change through organizing rallies, seminars, street plays and other similar events.

Due to changing dynamics in funding, two of the branch development workshops will not be organized along with leadership training and PMER workshops, but resources are being tapped locally to carry-out these initiatives.

Expected Outcome 2: A modern financial systems and good reporting set-up is one of the major priorities for the National Society for 2008. To enable modernization of the financial management system at the IRCS national headquarters, the Navision project was agreed upon and initiated at the beginning of the year. During the reporting period the software was purchased and a plan of action for implementation is being put together

Expected Outcome 3: The facility of web conferencing has been provided to better equip the branches for internal communication and inter-branch networking. The Federation has been working closely with the IRCS on information and communication development. The Indian Red Cross website (www.indianredcross.org) was reviewed redesigned and updated during the reporting period. The updated and revised website is now operational.

⁶ SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

The draft communication strategy is being developed for the National Society with inputs from the ICRC. A taskforce has been formed with representation from the Federation and the National Society along with ICRC to carry out this work.

New initiatives in volunteer training are being taken up to ensure that they understand and act on the basis of the Fundamental Principles in their work with vulnerable people in times of peace, disaster or armed conflict. This training includes: the legal and ideological basis of the Red Cross/Red Crescent, decision-making processes, mandates, as well as communications and relations with others.

Expected Outcome 4: IRCS is in the process of defining a strategy for resource mobilisation. Organizing the fund raising forum to discuss diversified sources of fund raising was an important activity for the IRCS state-branches which presently has been put on hold due to funding constraints, but the Federation is planning to raise resources and complete this activity.

Expected Outcome 5: The volunteers in the Red Cross Movement are the backbone of the Movement and if managed effectively, they carry forward the effective implementation of any programme, both in times of peace and emergency. By the end of January 2008, the Bird flu situation in West Bengal has become alarming and it was at this juncture that the performance of IRCS Volunteer brigade helped the district administration to face this challenge.

As a further step towards effective management of volunteers, the plan for establishing a volunteer management cell at national headquarters and further establishing a database for volunteers on a pilot basis is underway in one of the states and shall soon be taken up for implementation by the National Society.

The draft Red Cross booklet has been amended and is due for printing after resources for the same have been mobilised.

Constraints and Constraints:

The resource mobilization under OD programme is a major challenge and as a result the organizational development support to branches has been limited. Several discussions with the senior management and the OD counter part at the National Society have helped in reaching a better understanding of the subject and to address this challenge in an innovative manner like for example through the integrated programming approach at branch level.

Humanitarian Values

Programme component	Component outcome
1. Promotion of principles and values of the Movement	IRCS staff, members, volunteers and community have better understanding of the Movement's principles and values
2. Scaling-up and strengthening of humanitarian values within the IRCS advocacy programmes	More frequent application of humanitarian values in planning and implementing all programmes in the targeted states

Achievements

Induction courses for IRCS Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Uttar Pradesh (UP) state-branches were conducted as per the plan by the IRCS during the reporting period. These two states are considered to be disaster-prone and hence the IRCS has selected them to provide them with a basic induction for their state/district branch secretaries, staff and volunteers. Total 37 from the MP state branch with 23 percent gender balance, while 58 from UP with 11 percent gender balanced participated in the course. More focus was given to the Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values including the history.



A participant sharing her understanding about the RCRC Movement during an Induction Course for the IRCS Madhya Pradesh branches (March, 2006) (Photo: International Federation)

An orientation session on the humanitarian values (HV) for the Federation India Office staff was organized in February 2008. Approximately 10 people (including Federation regional OD delegate) participated. The objectives of the session were:

- To have a briefing on humanitarian values in terms of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement
- To review the 2006/07 HV programme support which was extended to the IRCS
- To obtain inputs from the participants to improve the current programme
- To encourage the programme managers to integrate Principles and Values better in their respective IRCS projects.

The IRCS national headquarters as well as the branches are recognizing new areas under Principles and Values by identifying social needs in the National Society. The IRCS headquarters organized a day-long meeting on 'combating the declining sex ratio' in April 2008. The event focused on a few key state branches of the IRCS, which are Punjab, Haryana and Delhi. Government officials, senior officials of the IRCS and the Movement partners participated in the meeting. The objective of this meeting was to initiate a nationwide awareness generation drive by the IRCS in combating the declining sex ratio. During the discussion it was clear that increasing female foeticide in India could spark a serious socio-cultural problem.

The IRCS Assam state-branch has developed a case study on gender – describing why women are more vulnerable in the state and what steps the state-branch is taking in line with the Principles and Values of the Movement. During flood relief operation in 2008 in Assam, gender aspects were taken into consideration. Psychological support to the women during and after flood were provided, by female volunteers and nurses. The branch has encouraged female participation in trainings and workshops from districts. The state disaster response team members were conscious of detecting unfair practices in their camp-to-camp monitoring visits to the various flood affected districts of Assam.

"Basics about Red Cross" booklet for volunteers' induction training was drafted by the IRCS with inputs from the Federation and the ICRC. The funding support was discussed with the ICRC and this process was started in 2007 by the National Society.

Health officer of the Federation India office participated in "Introduction to mainstreaming disability issues in DRR" workshop organized by Handicap International at Delhi in April where 15 national/international delegates participated. This exposure developed an understanding of the vulnerability capacities, needs and rights of persons with disabilities.

Constraints and Challenges:

Major constraint is that in India the HV is not a stand alone programme, it is a part of OD and that is the reason it does not have an independent budget. But a set of approved activities are being taken up in close coordination with other sectors, hence administrative delays are present.

Working in partnership

The working relationship of the Federation with National Society, the ICRC and the PNSs on all the programmes has been quite effective. In the health and care programme, the Global Alliance on HIV is promoting partnership within the Movement. IRCS is furthermore working in close collaboration with the government, National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) and the Red Cross Movement. In order to, address the community's health needs, the IRCS is developing a cadre of community volunteers through PHiE and RCV programmes which could further support the government and UN agencies. A memorandum of understanding (MuO) is in place between the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Red Cross Movement which is increasingly being made operational. ICRC provided valuable inputs to the communication strategy. The volunteer management project is under discussion with the German Red Cross and is awaiting approval from IRCS Secretary General.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The IRCS is a part of the HIV Global Alliance for South Asia. The mid-term evaluation of the Regional HIV/AIDS programme was conducted in February to assess the progress of the programme. Follow up on the evaluation is ongoing.

The recently organised PPP training involving all programme sectors at the IRCS national headquarters will support the National Society staff in improving its planning, programming and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Localising the core Federation programmes such as creating awareness on female foeticide is a good example for how serious needs in the society are being addressed by the National Society.

Looking ahead

The IRCS is taking necessary steps to mark an increased presence among the HIV players in the region for scaling up their capacity, response and visibility in the country. A concept note on HIV and PHiE has been submitted to the Hong Kong branch of the Red Cross Society of China for developing a long-term partnership. Discussions are underway for the IRCS to be involved in the social mobilisation campaign for measles during the last quarter of 2008.

Progress on integrating humanitarian values with other programmes has become visible as the Principles and Values have been given their due place in the HIV policy and strategy and also in the operational plan of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the issues related to non-discrimination have also been included in the training contents of HIV/AIDS, PHiE and RCV programmes.

How we work

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".

Global Agenda Goals:

- 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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