

Annual report

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Human Resource (HR) Management Strategy

MAA00034

14 April 2010

This report covers the period 1 January to 31
December 2009.



IFRC's Secretary General addressing participants of the HR seminar. Over 90 HR professionals gathered this year to discuss Movement HR strategic developments.
IFRC

In brief

Programme purpose: To build and consolidate a coherent human resources strategy which will strengthen the volunteer and staff base of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Programme(s) summary: The following activities were carried out during the year:

Effective HR management at the zone level

Two HR global team meetings were held in April and September. These meetings set out the HR strategic direction to be adhered to globally. The meetings also reviewed the HR policies, procedures and processes, and agreed on how to consolidate these standards to maintain a coherent HR management global approach. Recognizing that HR systems are critical to enable effective HR management at the zone level, an evaluation of the main HR information system (SAP), was commissioned in December. All zones received technical support to improve the remuneration and benefits system for national staff.

Developing a coherent HR Management Strategy and Approach

The HR global meeting in April analysed the new management vision, and agreed on a new HR strategy which was shared with senior management. On further reflection, it was agreed that with the IFRC's Strategy 2020 on the horizon, it was prudent to wait until the strategy was approved by the General Assembly in November, before finalizing the HR strategy. A longer-term HR strategy aligned to Strategy 2020 is now being formulated.

The human resources group for the international deployment of delegates comprising of National Societies who deploy delegates met in Canada in March, and in Geneva in September. The group addressed various issues, and made recommendations on how human

resources in National Societies and the secretariat can work effectively together to empower zones to maintain a set of standards and quality of human resource management in a decentralized structure.

A successful HR seminar with more than 90 participants from National Societies from all over the world was held at the end of September. The programme sponsored the attendance of 17 participants.

Developing international management capability

The assessment centre approach was reviewed. With support from the British Red Cross, the approach was adjusted, and another assessment centre for 20 people was held in October. Seventeen people participated in the international managers' effectiveness learning journey (IMELJ).

Developing staff profiles to deliver the new operating model

The moving forward together process has resulted in a redefinition of business functions and a rightsizing of the secretariat to reflect the balance of work between Geneva and the zones. To accompany this process, a new competency framework was drafted. New staff rules were revised and presented to the General Assembly, and one of the main changes was to facilitate the rotation of staff to places where they are needed the most.

Financial situation: The total 2009 budget is CHF 925,134 (USD 891,274 or EUR 621,855), of which CHF 357,993 (39 per cent) covered during the reporting period (including opening balance). Overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 353,829 (38 per cent) of the budget. The amount spent which is 38 per cent of the budget, is the amount received from the UK Department for International Development (DFID). This year, a plan has been made which covers only the amount pledged by DFID.

[Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.](#)

No. of people we have reached: The overall objective of the programme is to improve the services provided to managers, staff and volunteers in all of the IFRC's operations through improved HR management practices. The direct target audiences are the Movement's international managers and HR staff.

Our partners: The HR strategy is overseen by the human resources strategic advisory group (HRSAG) comprising selected leaders from National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The IFRC works closely with its HR counterparts in National Societies in the development and delivery of specific initiatives.

Context

The secretariat started the year with a clear commitment from the senior management team to implement the **“moving forward together”** rightsizing process aimed at putting together a lean and efficient secretariat that can best serve the interests of National Societies. This process entailed readjusting structures in Geneva and in the field to align the organization to this vision.

In terms of effective human resources management, success in delivering this change process meant:

- Nurturing a new mindset that enables a positive attitude to finding new ways of working and thinking.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities, and enabling staff in the secretariat to work effectively with a shared vision and priorities.
- Getting the right people in the right places, and helping them to grow in their roles.

- Creating robust and innovative HR systems and procedures which are fair, inclusive, and transparent.
- Shifting the HR function from a transaction management to a more strategic role that is recognized, respected and valued.

A new senior management team was put into place in Geneva and in the zones. The human resource strategic achievements in this report have helped the new management team redefine business functions, reflect on the balance of work between Geneva and the field, clarify roles and responsibilities, and develop a new set of competencies framework to deliver set objectives.

Progress towards outcomes

Establishing effective HR management at the zone level

Outcome(s)

It is expected that the new zone management structure will be in place and fully functional by the end of 2009. As part of the change process, the Africa zone will be consolidated into one zone resulting in five zone offices globally. Zone directors are expected to be appointed, and HR managers identified or confirmed and supported to implement the changes in the new structure. The location for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) zone needs to be resolved, and priority support given to this zone to enable it to be at the same level of functionality as the other zones.

Achievements

- A new zone management team was put in place, and comprises of the zone director, the head of support services and the head of programmes. Zone HR managers in three zones were confirmed, and the HR manager position for Africa is open for recruitment. An HR manager for MENA was recently appointed.
- The global HR team met twice during the year, and group teleconferences were held every six weeks in 2009. This approach has nurtured a strong human resource professional group working coherently and cohesively with one global HR strategic approach.
- An external evaluation of the SAP was carried out in December to make an objective analysis of its suitability and functionality, and determine the feasibility of rolling out this system to the zones. Recommendations from this evaluation will be implemented in 2010. The HRONLINE system which enables employees to manage their own personnel data, and enables managers to view data of their team members was rolled out to the zones in South Africa, West Africa, East Africa and Europe. HR reporting has been improved, and statistics and other HR-related reports can be found on FedNet.
- The psychological support programme for Federation staff has been rolled out to three zones: Africa, America and Europe. The experience of initiating this programme has been positive, and this will ensure that the IFRC can better address the needs of its staff.
- A remuneration and benefits system for national professionals for the Europe zone was modelled, and new salary bands have been put in place for staff in Budapest, Moscow and Almaty. Other zones were provided with technical support and guidance on how to handle remuneration and benefits issues professionally in the zones.

Constraints or Challenges

- The MENA zone had no HR manager because of difficulties in resolving where the zone office should be located. HR activities for the zone have been supported through Geneva, and this means that the HR agenda is not taking place effectively as in other zones.

- There are operational difficulties with rolling out the SAP because of its complexity. It is hoped that implementation of the recommendations of the SAP evaluation will improve this situation.

Developing international management capability

Outcome(s)

It is expected that a critical mass of international managers that have passed the assessment centre are fast tracked for development through the IMELJ.

Achievements

- With new senior management in place, the assessment centre approach was reviewed, and a review report with recommendations for the future tabled to the new senior management team.
- With support from the British Red Cross, the recommendations from the internal review were followed up, and an adjusted assessment centre approach was conducted in October for 20 participants. To date, 180 candidates have undergone the assessment process in a period of 18 days. Seventy-five currently occupy senior management positions.
- Building on the positive feedback received from the first round of the “international managers effectiveness learning journey” organized in Budapest in 2008, a 2nd round was organized at the end of 2009. Some improvements took place in the different steps of the learning journey. The selection of the participant integrated more systematically the involvement of senior management in order to ensure continuity in the learning. A set of online courses provided by the learning platform allowed the participant to get familiar with some of the management and leadership theories before starting the workshop. The coaching component which covers a period of 12 months was reinforced by the addition of new coaches, all certified to provide feedback on the 360 assessment. The 360 assessment which represents the foundation of the personal development plan drafted by all participants gave a balanced perspective of feedback from all stakeholders, and evaluated their impact on the daily working life. In total, 17 participants from all regional zones participated, and are still involved in the learning journey.

Constraints or Challenges

A sizeable number of people were assessed in the organization. The challenge remains to ensure and enforce that everyone in a managerial role is assessed.

It is intended that participants of the international learning journey should be people who are in the assessment centre pool of high potentials. There were difficulties experienced in getting the right group of people into this programme, and improved guidelines on the criteria for participation will be put into place.

Although the learning journey is highly appreciated, only 35 people have benefited, and the organization will need to give due consideration to scaling up this programme.

Developing staff profiles to deliver the new operating system

Outcome(s)

It is expected that a new profiling approach is developed to suit the “moving forward together” vision.

Achievements

- A new competency framework was drafted. This framework received positive acknowledgement from the senior management team. Pretesting of the new framework took place throughout the year, and it is hoped that this feedback can be consolidated in 2010.
- New staff rules were adopted by the General Assembly in November and part of the new changes will be to enable rotation of staff to places where they are needed the most. A working group has been set to review staff regulations to include this change.
- Integration of Federation offices into National Societies is a key element for the new working model. An example of how this will work has happened in the Americas, and it is anticipated that further integration will occur in the coming year.
- The learning platform has been implemented and successfully launched. This learning management system will bring learning to ALL staff in the secretariat (even in remote locations, due to excellent connectivity performance). All staff is de facto registered to the platform, and have access to different learning packages. A welcome package will allow, for the first time, a standardized approach to staff induction, consisting of not only guidelines, but also, curriculum, including requests for meetings or documents to read. At the end of 2009, more than 4,000 users took courses. Courses are available in English, French, Spanish and Russian. One of the most popular courses is the presentation of the security rules.
- The World of Red Cross and Red Crescent (WORC) induction to the Movement has been finalized, and more than 700 users have taken it during 2009. It consists of 10 modules presenting all institutional components of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. A final test validates the successful learning. Some 2nd level courses are already requesting WORC as a prerequisite. Interestingly, staff members from UN agencies, government development agencies and international non-governmental organizations are taking the course voluntarily in order to know better their main partner in humanitarian activities.
- IMPACT, a specific induction to the various international activities of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has been re-designed, tested and finalized. The change was necessary, due to the implementation of the WORC. In 2009, more than 330 international staff have been trained. The major improvement has been to increase standardization and quality control of the course curriculum.

Constraints or Challenges

The right sizing of the secretariat has been a very demanding process for the HR team which had to spend more time on contract management. Therefore, less time was available for strategic activities such as aligning work profiles to the business model, and growing new competencies.

Developing a coherent HR management strategy and approach

Outcome(s)

It is expected that the Movement has a common human resource approach aligned around the IFRC's values and principles. It is also expected that there is increased understanding and joint HR initiatives through the network of National Society staff.

Achievements

- The HR global meeting in April analysed the **moving forward together** vision and agreed on a new draft HR strategy which was shared with senior management. It was subsequently agreed to wait for the Strategy 2020 adoption in order to have a framework for the long term.
- The human resources group for the international deployment of delegates comprising of National Societies who deploy delegates met in Canada in March, and in Geneva in September. The group addressed various issues, and made recommendations on how

- The HR seminar this year attracted more than 90 participants comprising of National Societies, the secretariat and the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) HR professionals. Seventeen participants from National Societies were funded by this programme. A planning group was established to help the secretariat produce a balanced agenda for this group which is diverse in its HR needs and interests. The overall rating of the seminar was very positive, with a 94 per cent rating it as good to excellent. Presentations from the seminar have been shared on the learning platform, accessible to all HR professionals in the Movement. During the four days, every participant could attend:
 - Four inspiring lectures provided by experienced and well-known key note speakers.
 - Eight sessions of sharing best practices, provided mainly by National Society HR professionals.
 - Seven short sessions providing the latest HR developments presented by ICRC and Federation staff.
 - Four training sessions on identified HR issues of common concern provided mainly by external partners.
 - Three networking events allowing participants to connect with others.

- The Europe zone initiated a process with support from the Swedish Red Cross to build the capacity of National Societies in the zone. A workshop was held to kick start this activity. Financial and technical support was provided to this activity from this programme. The overall aim of the meeting was to bring together National Societies from across the Europe zone to knowledge share, network and build skills, thus building capacity in human resources. Expected outcomes included: awareness of HR capacity in National Societies across the zone, including strengths and areas of development; match making between National Societies strong in certain HR areas with National Societies requiring development; networking and relationship building amongst participants thereby forming a Europe zone HR network for continued collaboration and networking after the meeting; and sharing and learning of HR best practices and developments.

Summary of Key Learning Points

- *Opportunity to hear and share ideas*
- *Attained new knowledge and skills*
- *Met people with similar problems*
- *Understanding of level of OD and HR in National Societies*
- *Reflected on the role of HR and its advantage*
- *How HR can contribute to better National Societies*
- *Learnt how to listen*
- *Peer Learning is a valuable tool to make people talk, to listen and to share learning*

The agenda strove to encourage participative approaches, and offer formal and informal opportunities for participants to engage with each other. Participants were given opportunities to share experiences in HR, discuss what HR is to them and their organizations, and to identify key people in the group for further discussion and collaboration.

In terms of follow-up actions, the group acknowledged that they share the same problems as other HR managers in other National Societies. They pledged to develop themselves further on the new topics they learned, disseminate the information with colleagues in their National Societies, and use the knowledge to update some HR procedures, such as performance appraisals, in their National Societies.

Constraints or Challenges

Over the years, the HR strategy has been overseen by the human resources strategic advisory group. The new senior management still needs to define this group and commission it to this role. In the meantime, there is a lack of a movement advisory group to champion the HR role.

Working in partnership

A lot of collaboration on human resources management is taking place within the Movement as narrated in this report. Efforts are also being put with the HR global team to keep abreast with new HR trends, as well as to share best practices. The HR director for Médecins Sans Frontières Holland was invited to the HR global team meeting in April, and he shared insights which were highly appreciated on the role of HR in managing change. External speakers gave thought provoking key note speeches during the seminar

Several seminars hosted by private organizations and head hunters on strategic HR management have been attended by various HR team members.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The investment in HR management capacity in the secretariat and in National Societies is fundamental to assure the delivery of the organization's goals:

- A clear and aligned HR strategy will enable a coherent HR management approach in the IFRC.
- Improved leadership and management in the field will impact directly on service delivery to National Societies.
- Effective zone human resource management will broaden the IFRC's ability to reach out to all people in places where it operates, and thereby increase its diversity targets.
- The new learning and development approach will enhance the IFRC's ability to retain and develop a strong professional talent base.

Looking ahead

Despite challenges with implementation of the change process, all the activities planned for 2010 were accomplished. There are a number of initiatives started in 2009 which will need to be carried forward to 2010 as follows:

- With the approval of Strategy 2020, a new HR strategy ideally covering the next five years will need to be formulated. The process of writing this strategy will involve the entire HR global team to ensure that it covers all HR concerns.
- Discussions were held with selected National Societies during the General Assembly with the aim to revive the human resource strategic advisory group. New terms of reference will be put in place, and the group will start its work as early as possible in 2010.
- Implementation of the recommendations from the review of SAP will be crucial to maintain a well-functioning global HR system.
- The change process should be completed in Geneva within the first quarter of 2010, and a full-scale job review will take place in the field. A review of the job classification system will take place with the aim to implement a new methodology that can be used to evaluate all jobs across the organization.
- The competency framework will be finalized and utilized in all HR processes, such as the assessment centre, recruitment and development.
- The Haiti earthquake disaster has revealed some issues that need to be followed up to ensure better and faster mobilization of people in emergencies.
- The MENA zone is lagging behind in human resources, and maximum support will be given to this zone to bring it to the level of functionality achieved by other zones.
- Each workplace will need to review the staff regulations to align them to the new staff rules adopted by the General Assembly.
- Supporting HR capacity building in the zones should be given more priority, and with most of the zones set up, it is envisaged that this will get more attention in 2010.

How we work

The IFRC's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the IFRC'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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