

Annual report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Palestine Red Crescent Society

MAAPS001

5 May 2010

This report covers the period 01 January 2009
to 31 December 2009.



The summer camps run in 2009 for school children reached a total of 10,440 children. **Palestine Red Crescent Society.**

In brief

Programme outcome: Support the Palestine Red Crescent Society (Palestine RC) response to the needs of the most vulnerable in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and the Palestinian refugees in the diaspora.

Programmes summary: Months after the war on Gaza and its heavy consequences in terms of loss of human life, massive destruction and extreme suffering, little or none building materials have entered Gaza and as a consequence rubble and destroyed buildings are still the landscape of Gaza. In the background, the peace talks have been stalled for all of 2009 with a renewed effort to revive them towards the end of the year.

Palestine RC has conducted a thorough evaluation of its large humanitarian operation in Gaza and has started developing further its capacities in disaster management and logistics. In the West Bank and Gaza, despite the very difficult conditions (the concrete wall, the hundreds of checkpoints and roadblocks), Palestine RC has continued to deliver quality services to several hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people through programmes such as psycho-social support, primary and secondary health care, rehabilitation and abilities development and emergency medical (ambulance) services. Most of those programmes have been provided as well to those parts of Lebanon, Syria and Egypt where most Palestinian refugees have been living. Palestine RC is possibly the only Palestinian institution able to work independently in the West Bank, Gaza and the diaspora abroad.

The coordination of programme support from the many Movement and non-Movement partners has benefitted from the Operational Alliance (OA) spirit, which clearly puts the National Society in the lead of planning, coordination, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting and takes advantage of the resources and expertise of all of its partners. Towards the end of 2009, the OA is being enhanced in order to further improve programme coordination. In the spirit of the OA, this report

covers the whole of Palestine RC's activities and the support and cooperation of its partners.

Financial situation: The total 2009 budget is CHF 1,905,029 (USD 1,757,580 or EUR 1,250,461), of which CHF 1,950,791 (102 per cent) covered during the reporting period (including opening balance). Overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 1,621,918 (85 per cent) of the budget¹.

The vast majority of programme support for Palestine RC is received through bilateral agreements with sister societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Federation, as well as substantial financial support from the Palestinian Government.

[Click here to go directly to the financial report on the International Federation secretariat component of the total budget.](#)

See also Gaza Humanitarian Crisis DREF Operation and related reports at: <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=61>

No. of people we have reached: The overall number of beneficiaries reached by Palestine RC in Gaza after the war was approximately 25,000 families (approximately 150,000 persons). In primary health care, over 802,698 services were provided through the network of the National Society's centres and 136,351 persons directly benefited from training and informative sessions. In secondary health care, the 15 Palestine RC hospitals provided around 1,5 million medical specialised services to Palestinians both in the West Bank and Gaza as well as in Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. In terms of direct beneficiaries, the overall number of people assisted in secondary health care during 2009 was 236,314 persons.

During 2009, Palestine RC implemented 69,968 emergency medical services with a total of 296 emergency medical teams. In addition, 65,207 persons benefitted from training and workshops in emergency services. On the other hand, the rehabilitation and ability development programme reached 55,354 persons.

During the reporting period, more than 64,583 community members from both Gaza and the West Bank participated in community workshops and/or have received psycho-social support services, and more than 8,000 children, 4,000 parents and 400 teachers and schools counselors have been involved in weekly guided psycho-social support workshops. The summer camps run in 2009 reached a total of 10,440 children.

In addition, a total number of 20 dissemination activities were held in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (12 in the West Bank, six in Gaza and two in Lebanon), to which 811 persons among Palestine RC staff and volunteers, Palestinian Authority security officers and local health providers participated.

Our partners: A number of community-based and government-based organisations, international organisations, United Nations (UN) and several developmental agencies, and partners within the RC/RC Movement including sister National Societies, ICRC, and the International Federation representations have been the main partners during the reporting period. A detailed table on the partners of Palestine RC can be found on page 11 of this report.

Two private donors, Norwegian Red Cross, and Swedish government through Swedish Red Cross have been the main contributors to the International Federation component of the Plan during 2009. A pledge has also been received from the Italian Red Cross during the reporting period, but the implementation timeframe of this contribution is 2010.

¹ As can be seen in the financial report linked to the narrative, the 2009 funding includes CHF 202,722 from the Italian Red Cross. The pledge has been signed in the end of 2009 and thus registered in the system with the date of this year, but is crossing years in terms of implementation and in reality is for 2010. Thus, the actual implementation rate of this Plan is not 85 percent (expenditure of 1,621,918 divided into the funding of 1,950,791) but is 93 per cent (expenditure of 1,621,918 divided into the funding excluding this contribution).

Context

The Palestinian territory is fragmented into small parcels (that represent a small minority of the territory of the West Bank); and these parcels are often not united among them. The many small and large Israeli settlements are occupying today an area that enters deep into the West Bank (almost dividing it in three small regions), further fragmenting, through a complex system of denied, closed, partially closed or controlled access, the tiny territory in the hands of the Palestinians. The wall/fence² seals off the West Bank, and the combination of the wall/fence and the maritime control complete the siege of the Gaza Strip, were it not for the border with Egypt, also under tight control. The siege in Gaza completely sealed off more than 1.5 million people. A further division is the one among the Palestinian Authority ruling in the West Bank, and the de facto authorities (Hamas) ruling the Gaza Strip. According to the closure map of West Bank (as of June 2009³), several Palestinian houses are destroyed in East Jerusalem.

On 27 December 2008 the war on Gaza began, which had a severe impact on the psycho-social well being of the population during 2009. At the end of 2009, due to the ongoing almost total blockage on building materials and despite efforts by the international community to ease it, little or none reconstruction has started in Gaza. The peace process, which had been stalled since the war on Gaza, has seen timid signs of resumption. At the moment of writing this report, the 'proximity talks' have not started yet. While the Israelis blame the Palestinian president for not coming back to the negotiating table, the Palestinians insist that they will not resume talks until a complete freeze of construction of settlements in East Jerusalem is respected, as it had been agreed during the latest round of talks. Critics of the Israeli settlement policy estimate that this continues creating facts that will be difficult to revert at a negotiation table. The Arab league has opened a window for peace talks to deliver some results, under condition, should they fail, that the offer of a comprehensive peace agreement would be withdrawn. At the same time, the Palestinian prime minister has announced that a unilateral declaration of the State of Palestine will take place mid 2011, and has been working on the development of the structure and systems of the future state. Finally, the presidential and parliamentary elections (scheduled for late 2009) were postponed for end spring 2010, although it seems difficult to hold them under present circumstances. Preparations are ongoing to hold municipality elections.

Progress towards outcomes

In spite of a very difficult and challenging environment and the severe limitations in movements imposed by the military occupation, Palestine RC has been managing its humanitarian assistance to the population in full respect of the Fundamental Principles, focusing its work on the vulnerable and enhancing its cooperation with several Movement and non-Movement partners.

The Palestine RC held its General Assembly and 40th anniversary in 2009. It also proceeded to a thorough evaluation of the Gaza operation and has since, with support by its main partners, started implementing the recommendations that stemmed from that review.

The work of the Movement-appointed monitor for the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Palestine RC and Magen David Adom (MDA) continued during 2009, and a report was presented by the monitor to the Council of Delegates held in Nairobi in November.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent (RC/RC) Movement is well represented in Palestine. Due to the prevailing conflict environment, the ICRC has a very large presence and a wide array of activities, part of which is in cooperation with the Palestine RC. Seven RC/RC National Societies - Danish, German, Italian, Norwegian (representing also the Swedish), Spanish, Qatar and Turkish - are present in Palestine through their delegates. Several more have been supporting Palestine RC without a direct presence in Palestine. The International Federation representative has changed during 2009, and a new person has been appointed at the end of the year. The OA launched in 2006 and comprising all

²According to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), at the end of 2009, more than 60 % of the wall is finished. Of it, only 15 % is built on the 1949 armistice line, while 85 % is built inside the West Bank.

³ Source: http://www.ochaopt.org/?module=displaysection§ion_id=96&format=html

Palestine RC programmes, suffered from the priority given to the support to the victims of the Gaza war, and by the end of the year the process has been resumed to continue increasing impact through maximising the use of resources around the National Society's programmes.

While the International Federation secretariat has not been directly supporting all of the following programmes, it has been supporting the OA and more generally the facilitation of the cooperation among Palestine RC and its partner National Societies (PNSs). The spirit of the OA is to aggregate partners around each programme area of the National Society in order to enhance efficiency and impact. It is therefore important to report on the whole of the programme activities of the Palestine RC and the support provided by its PNSs in order to reflect the International Federation's overall service delivery in Palestine. Where the International Federation secretariat has directly (either financially, technically or in other forms) supported a specific programme of Palestine RC, this has been specified in the text.

Disaster Management

Outcome

- Effective operational linkages between disaster management and other programmes are established; thus contributing to improved Palestine RC disaster management capacities and adjustments to its organizational structure.

Achievements

In January 2009, Palestine RC focused mainly on the provision of emergency services during the war on Gaza under tremendous challenges, including several cases of non-respect of the protective emblem of the RC/RC and the bombing of the main warehouse of the Palestine RC in Gaza. Immediately after the ceasefire, the disaster management unit provided emergency shelter to almost 5,000 persons in seven tent camps, and distributed hygiene kits and coordinated provision of water and food with other agencies. According to Palestine RC reports, the overall number of beneficiaries reached by Palestine RC in Gaza after the war is approximately 25,000 families (approximately 150,000 persons), which together with the estimated 10,000 persons who benefitted from simulations/drills and trainings represents almost 24 % of the overall beneficiaries served in 2009.

The second half of 2009 was devoted to the participatory evaluation of the Gaza operation. Supported by the National Societies of Germany, Norway, Britain and the International Federation, the evaluation was conducted by a team led by an external expert together with experts in emergency health and logistics. The process was driven by a steering committee from Palestine RC, German RC, Norwegian Red Cross, ICRC and International Federation. The findings of the evaluation, presented during the October 2009 partnership meeting, indicate the need to develop a Palestine RC disaster management strategy to enhance the National Society's public health in emergencies and logistics capacities. Palestine RC has accepted the recommendations and has since begun working towards their implementation, setting up inter-departmental task forces to follow up the work.

Palestine RC counts with the support of the German RC in disaster risk reduction (DRR), and together with the Danish, German, Norwegian and Swedish Red Cross has towards the end of 2009 presented a consortium project proposal for disaster management capacity building to the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO).

The Palestine RC has updated its contingency plans, and plays a major role in working with the higher council of civil defence.

Constraints or Challenges

During and after the war on Gaza, the severe restrictions imposed to the humanitarian goods to enter Gaza and free movement of humanitarian personnel have severely challenged the Movement response to this humanitarian tragedy. To date, some relief goods and equipment sent to Palestine RC for the assistance to the victims of the war on Gaza are still pending the authorization.

Health and Care

Outcome

- Affordable and quality primary health care (PHC) services and health education are regularly delivered to the people in the oPt (primary health care).
- The Palestine RC hospitals in oPt and the diaspora continue providing secondary health care (SHC) services to the Palestinian population (secondary health care).
- People residing in oPt have access to emergency medical services (EMS).
- Safe blood is provided from healthy voluntary donors to all Palestinians who need it at all times (national blood transfusion services).
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged Palestinian people are socially and psychologically supported (social welfare).
- Quality of life of persons with disabilities and their families in the Palestinian community are improved through rehabilitation and development of their abilities towards better integration (rehabilitation and ability development).
- Individuals from the Palestine RC staff and volunteers, beneficiaries, and selected underserved groups are equipped with skills and individualized tools that aid in the reduction of personal damages and negative external effects and behaviour (psycho-social support programme).

Achievements

Primary health care

During 2009, according to Palestine RC registers, over 802,698 services (medical consultations, laboratory tests, x-rays, dental care, community based and home visits) were provided through the network of the National Society's PHC centres throughout Palestine. During the same period, 136,351 persons directly benefited from training and informative sessions. In terms of beneficiaries, PHC activities cover approximately 20,4 % of the overall number. The programme counts on the generous support from the Swedish and Norwegian Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross (with funding from the Spanish Cooperation Agency AECID), as well as the German and Finnish Red Cross for the community based development (funded 70 per cent by the European Union). Qatar Red Crescent is a contributor to the PHC programme as well.

Palestine RC has already been harmonizing some of its services with the Ministry of Health (MoH), and it is foreseen that discussions about the hand-over of the remaining curative services will be held in the future. This will allow Palestine RC to focus more on health education and prevention. The programme has been actively supported by the health department of the International Federation's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) zone office in Amman.

Constraints or Challenges

Due to the tight closure imposed on Gaza and the severe restrictions on influx of humanitarian goods, it has been difficult to bring through new medicine, medical equipment, and medical supplies.

Secondary health care

Throughout 2009, the 15 Palestine RC hospitals have provided around 1,5 million medical specialized services to Palestinians both in the West Bank and Gaza as well as in Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. In terms of direct beneficiaries, the overall number of people assisted in secondary health care during 2009 was 236,314 persons. The network of hospitals is providing quality services complementary to those of the Palestinian health authorities.

In Gaza, the war on Gaza seriously affected the capacity to continue delivering specialized services. The air and ground attacks on the premises that group the hospital, the social centre and the administrative building resulted in the destruction of parts of those buildings. A master plan for the reconstruction and the renovation of the area is being developed by Palestine RC and counts on generous contributions from a list of donors, including the French Cooperation Agency (ADF), the ICRC, and the Red Crescent and Red Cross National Societies of Qatar, Malaysia, United States, Unites Arab Emirates and Australia.

Constraints or Challenges

The hospitals, today, have not yet a common system to collect and process data in a compatible and comparable manner. It is foreseen that the Palestinian health authorities will adopt a common software to facilitate exactly the epidemiology treatment of data and information, and it would be advisable for Palestine RC to adopt the same software.

For Gaza, the lack of availability or of influx of building materials due to the blockage has been delaying the reconstruction of the health premises.

EMS

In 2009, Palestine RC continued its work and refined the standards for vehicles including type, conversion and equipment and developed and started using the operational management manual. In the domain of professional training, Palestine RC developed its annual recertification of EMS skills to keep patient care skills current. In terms of equipment, Palestine RC now counts on a common VHF radio system and a common management information system and call monitoring installed in all EMS stations in the West Bank. In addition, global positioning system (GPS) has been installed on all vehicles and its software in all EMS stations although it still presents some problems of use. Palestine RC manages the 101 emergency number in the West Bank and Gaza and in 2009 the National Society implemented 69,968 EMS with 98 ambulances in the West Bank (in nine main stations and 26 substations) and 40 in Gaza Strip (in five main stations) and one in Syria, with a total of 296 emergency medical teams.

The EMS programme delivers first aid training both to communities and institutions and a simplified first aid brochure targeting the local community was produced in celebration of the World First Aid Day. In addition, an emergency dispatch protocol and a first aid book were produced. In total, 65,207 persons benefitted from training and workshops.

It is foreseen that Palestine RC will concentrate its future plans on developing five new substations and the integration of all systems used in the programme (management information system, electronic call monitoring system, and GPS).

Constraints or Challenges

The main constraints are still due to the serious and heavy limitations imposed to the free movement of the Palestine RC ambulances. Still many checkpoints require the back-to-back system where an ambulance carries the patient until the checkpoint, and another one (either Palestine RC's, the MoH's or, in most cases of transport to Israeli hospitals, MDA) picks the patient up on the other side of the checkpoint. This issue is the object, amongst others, of the MoU between Palestine RC and MDA, and reports from the special monitor of the MoU are available upon request.

In addition, severe damage has been inflicted to EMS infrastructure during the 2008/2009 war on Gaza, and since then VHF repeaters and building materials have not entered Gaza limiting the possibility to recover full operational capability. In addition, due to the difficulties to move from West Bank to Gaza and vice-versa) there are different capacities, management and training in the West Bank and Gaza.

National blood transfusion services

This national blood transfusion services programme has been finalised and is no more implemented.

Social welfare

The social welfare programme is now integrated to the rehabilitation programme.

Rehabilitation and ability development

2009 was a successful year for this programme that reached 55,354 persons. Palestine RC successfully organized the second national rehabilitation conference for Palestine (the first had been organized in 2005). The conference gathered all the actors involved in ability development and disability support, both from the national authorities (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs) as well as from the civil society and representatives of international organisations, together with selected representatives (beneficiaries) of Palestine RC programmes. As an important step in advocacy as part

of humanitarian diplomacy, this conference created the first community based rehabilitation committee in Palestine and met with the prime minister of the Palestinian Authority.

The consultant of the programme and dean of the Ability Development College in the Gaza Strip, Dr. Jean Calder, was awarded with the Henry Davidson award for outstanding humanitarian services at the International Federation's General Assembly held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November. The Ability Development College in Gaza is the only college in the oPt that graduates professionals in the rehabilitation with business administration degree and is accredited by the Ministry of Education.

For the first time, two students that attended one of the special schools for the hearing impaired of the Palestine RC passed successfully through the formal exam at the end of high school (baccalaureate) and has since started attending university.

As part of the Palestine RC-led Movement response to the war on Gaza, a database on disabilities in Gaza has been established for the first time. Thanks to this approach, 1,650 disabled persons received assistance devices.

The home enrichment programme, focusing on community based special education, has increased its number of outreach teams from four to six. The new teams are working in Jericho and the Jordan Valley area, and in the Jerusalem area. Finally, new hearing aids have begun to be distributed according to improved hearing tests. Palestine RC also runs an orphanage in Tulkarem, a house for the elderly in Nablus and 18 kindergartens. The programme counts on the generous support by Asamblea de Cooperacion por la Paz, the Norwegian RC, the Swedish RC, and the Spanish RC (funding from European Union, AECID and the Junta Castilla la Mancha).

Constraints or Challenges

Despite the great work deployed by the Palestine RC, according to official sources (Ministry of Social Affairs), only 40 % of people affected by disabilities are reached by some state, Palestine RC or other assistance or programmes. The remaining 60 % is still submerged and hidden. This reinforces the view of the need to continue promoting changes of attitudes and behaviours in the communities in relation to disabilities.

According to the same source, the existing law on disabilities which are quite advanced is not being fully implemented by the same authorities who should supervise its implementation.

Finally, Palestine RC faced a problem in recruiting professionally-prepared staff, since no high-level training institution exists in Palestine.

Psycho-social support programme

The psycho-social support programme is one of Palestine RC's most successful programmes both in terms of needs analysis and service delivery for an acute need as well as quantitative and qualitative monitoring of implemented activities.

The programme primarily aims at providing psycho-social support to children affected by the armed conflict. However, the methodology is both school and community based and therefore activities are not targeting children as an isolated group, but integrating their overall social environment including parents and caregivers, teachers and school counselors, and the community at large.

The activities cover both recreational and psycho-education aspects. They allow beneficiaries groups to discover their emotional and social needs, to release their stress, to share their feelings and thoughts, to strengthen the social fabric of the community, and participants are given an opportunity to learn new life and social skills as well as coping mechanisms such as managing their stress and dealing with loss and grief, thus contributing to both individual and collective resilience of the Palestinian community.

In 2009, more than 64,583 community members from both Gaza and the West Bank have participated in community workshops and/or have received psycho-social support services, and more than 8,000 children, 4,000 parents and 400 teachers and schools counselors have been involved in weekly guided psycho-social support workshops. Palestine RC also trains Jordan Red Crescent and Syrian Arab Red

Crescent volunteers working for Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria on management and implementation of psycho-social support programme activities.

Psycho-social workers of the Palestine RC are also trained to provide psycho-social first aid in times of crisis and emergency such as during the 2008-2009 war in Gaza, when over 1,150 emergency interventions were performed during the war for people affected by the conflict, including Palestine RC volunteers; and over 5,600 staff and their families took part in a series of one-day retreats.

Palestine RC took part also in several international forums and conferences. To be specifically noted is the presentation of a paper titled "drawing under occupation: the art of Palestinian children" at the 11th European Conference on Traumatic Stress in Oslo.

The programme has also been pioneering an integrated cooperation setting following the OA objectives, with four Movement partners - the Danish, French, Icelandic and Italian Red Cross - jointly supporting the Palestine RC psycho-social support department through a consortium. As a result, there has been a diminution of administrative and overhead costs, a stronger leadership of the Palestine RC and a neat increase in the multi-stakeholder ownership of the programme and its challenges. The consortium received funding from the European Union (ECHO) in 2009.

Constraints or Challenges

The programme faces a certain shortage of specialized staff and frequent turn-over of the team members. In addition, despite its clear focus on the long term outcomes and impact, it still depends on short term projects for its funding.

Organisational Development and Capacity Building

Outcomes

- The Palestine RC organizational systems are increasingly efficient, effective and able to contribute proportionally to the well being of the most vulnerable in the oPt and Diaspora (organisational development).
- Potentials and deepened knowledge about the Palestine RC principles and goals are promoted among volunteers, which bring investment in social development (youth and volunteers).

Achievements

Organisational development



The 10th General Assembly of the Palestine RC was held in early March. The General Assembly was attended by delegates from all over Palestine, and counted on the presence as observers of sister National Societies, the ICRC, and the International Federation. **Palestine RC.**

Palestine RC's revised strategic plan for 2009-2011 was adopted by the 10th General Assembly of the National Society in early March. The General Assembly was attended by delegates from all over Palestine, and counted on the presence as observers of sister National Societies, the ICRC, and the International Federation.

Palestine RC has for some years been counting on a professional organisational development manager. In 2009, the organisational development programme of the National Society, technically supported by the organisational development coordinator of the International Federation's MENA zone, has continued moving its focus towards integrating its activities into the different programmes and services areas of Palestine RC,

mainstreaming it as a part of the life of all programmes and departments. As a result, Palestine RC counts today with a modern approach to organisational development as a powerful tool to enhance programme and services delivery.

Numerous changes have taken place in Palestine RC in 2009. A new director of operations/programmes has been appointed. Palestine RC has set up an internal audit department (with a three-year contract with Ernst & Young to support this establishment). There are plans for a progressive decentralization of the programme implementation to the branches that will at the same time manage Palestine RC volunteers. Within the planning and development division, one unit is in charge of planning and research, which opens the way towards knowledge management and learning. Besides the results of the Gaza evaluation and its implications for Palestine RC (please see disaster management section), Palestine RC has, with support from the Norwegian Red Cross, initiated an external systems audit that will greatly contribute to detect any shortcomings in business processes and indicate ways to streamline them. In addition, the National Society is becoming more familiar with a new culture of working across programmes and using multi-disciplinary task forces and working groups.

Thanks to Palestine RC's investment in organisational development, the continuous support from the Norwegian RC and the technical assistance by the International Federation, these developments reflect the drive towards a more focused and efficient organization that the long exposure to organisational development practices has contributed to.

Constraints or Challenges

Showing the value added of organizational development and achieving commitment to long-term support is always difficult, and even more so in a context where simple things like harmonizing systems and procedures become challenges due to limitations of movement between the branches. In addition, Palestine RC has integrated its organisational development programme activities in the programmes and departments. There is scope for a clear understanding by partners of the need to continue supporting these activities as part of the programmes.

Youth and volunteers

During 2009, Palestine RC has reviewed its approach to youth and volunteering. Approximately 1,000 new volunteers have been integrated in activities such as social, cultural, environmental, fundraising, cleaning campaigns, sports events, summer camps, health awareness days, community centres, and volunteers were provided to some institutions for their community work (e.g. surveys for the national institute of statistics). In particular, the summer camps run in 2009 for school children were 87, reaching a total of 10,440 children in these eight to 10 days camps. A total of 2,000 volunteers were deployed for such camps.

In addition, Palestine RC has been undergoing a rethinking of its traditional approach to youth and volunteering. The present revision of the structure presents volunteers as a whole, of which a part is made of young volunteers with a specific identity. Both young volunteers (Palestine RC youth) and other volunteers can participate in programmes and activities intended for young Palestinian population; and the young volunteers can both take part in activities for young Palestinian population as well as other sectors of the population. Only some specific activities (peer to peer) are done only by young volunteers for young targeted population.

It is foreseen that in 2010 all volunteers will be gradually managed by the branches they belong to, and Palestine RC has been developing volunteering management cycle tools to enable the branch boards and managers to do so. The policy on volunteering is also in need to be revised and adapted to the new approach. Finally, in consideration of the high exposure of Palestine RC volunteers to extreme situations linked to the conflict, the National Society has realized the need to develop proper volunteering in emergency tools to better support the management of volunteers in conflicts or disasters, including mainstreaming the existing good experiences of psycho-social support to volunteers (one Palestine RC volunteer was killed in Jabaliya, Gaza on 4 January 2009, while on duty). Palestine RC counts today on 9,824 volunteers distributed in 63 volunteer and youth committees. The programme counts on the generous support of the Icelandic Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross (funds from the European Union).

Constraints or Challenges

A long-term strategy of volunteering development coupled with a systematic approach to the volunteer management cycle and the decentralization of the responsibility to the branches to manage them are the main challenges ahead in order for Palestine RC to maintain and enhance its leadership on the volunteering issues in Palestine.

Principles and Values

Outcome

- All the Palestine RC staff and volunteers are sensitized and trained on humanitarian values according to the National Society's code of conduct and the knowledge of public about humanitarian values is increased (information, dissemination and international humanitarian law).

Achievements

Palestine RC has been monitoring the humanitarian situation in Palestine and producing two main printed documents that illustrate its activities and focus on the humanitarian impact of the conflict - Panorama (a quarterly review in 2,000 copies) and Humanitarian duty report (an annual publication in 1,500 copies). In addition, a total number of 20 dissemination activities were held in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (12 in the West Bank, six in Gaza and two in Lebanon), to which 811 persons among Palestine RC staff and volunteers, Palestinian Authority security officers and local health providers participated. At the invitation of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOHE), Palestine RC took part in the annual student encounter held in Jericho during 11-13 August 2009 as part of exploring international humanitarian law (IHL).

Palestine RC IHL coordinator participated in the thematic workshop "Islam & IHL" that was organised in Amman and the IHL adviser participated in the annual legal advisers meeting that was held in Geneva in September.

Constraints or Challenges

The prevailing unbearable humanitarian situation in Gaza and the dire consequences of more than 40 years of military occupation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem challenges the dissemination activities.

Working in partnership

The Palestine RC has launched in 2006 its OA that covers the whole of its programmes. The process was and is facilitated by the International Federation and actively supported by the RC/RC National Society partners, with external support by the ICRC as well. It reached important results and contributed to a general improvement of the cooperation environment in support of Palestine RC. However, after the war on Gaza at the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, the process experienced a relative diminution of intensity. It is presently being resumed with a revision of its preliminary results and a focus on pragmatic manners to conjugate the spirit at the basis of the OA concept with the peculiar setup of a wider OA encompassing all Palestine RC programmes and the difficult context of the country.

Within the framework of the OA, Palestine RC has been holding an annual partnership meeting and an annual friends of Palestine RC meeting (top leadership of partner National Societies); and has made of its sectoral quarterly meetings a cornerstone for coordination of support to programmes. Palestine RC has also many partners from outside the Movement.

Finally, Palestine RC, with its partners, has taken practical steps to assess the overall effectiveness and efficiency of its response to the war on Gaza, through two parallel processes: an evaluation (report available upon request) supported by the Norwegian and German RC and the International Federation;

and an internal exercise of lessons learned with the ICRC. It has since established 'research' as a component of its planning and development department.

Partners of Palestine RC

ICRC	Promotion of humanitarian Principles and Values; EMS; disaster management in conflict-affected areas.
International Federation	National Society capacity development; disaster management; health and care.
Danish Red Cross	Psycho-social services (together with Icelandic Red Cross).
Finnish Red Cross	Community based development and micro projects (through German Red Cross).
French Red Cross	Psycho-social services; humanitarian response to Gaza emergency.
German Red Cross	Community based development and micro projects (together with Finnish Red Cross).
Icelandic Red Cross	Psycho-social services (through Danish Red Cross); youth and volunteers.
Italian Red Cross	Psycho-social services.
Netherlands Red Cross	Secondary health care; rehabilitation programme for disabled.
Norwegian Red Cross	PHC; rehabilitation programme for disabled; disaster management; organizational development; EMS (through the ICRC); humanitarian response to Gaza emergency.
Qatar Red Crescent	PHC; SHC; humanitarian response to Gaza emergency.
Spanish Red Cross	PHC; rehabilitation programme for disabled; youth and volunteers; humanitarian response to Gaza emergency.
Swedish Red Cross	PHC; rehabilitation programme for disabled; disaster management; organizational development; humanitarian response to Gaza emergency.
Palestinian National Authority	General financial support.
Asamblea de Cooperacion por La Paz	PHC; rehabilitation programme for disabled; SHC; disaster management; humanitarian response to Gaza emergency.
Norwegian Aid Committee	SHC; psycho-social services.
Norwegian Palestine Committee	Maternal, newborn and child health.
Save the Children	Psycho-social services.
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Psycho-social services.

Contributing to longer-term impact

Palestine RC is an active member of the International Federation at the regional and international level. Its activities contribute to the achievement of the three strategic aims of Strategy 2020. The renewed focus on community work and the inclusion of local communities in the planning and implementation processes of programmes and projects responds to the need of the vulnerable.

Palestine RC is committed to do good use of the learning it generates, and to do it together with its partners in an open way, thus supporting the creation of a global environment conducive for global learning. The recent evaluation of the Gaza operation, together with the ongoing systems audit, the set-up of a modern internal audit department with support from Ernst & Young, its commitment to the definition of common standards with its partners within the OA all indicate a strong commitment towards management of the knowledge and the learning generated.

Looking ahead

Palestine remains a peculiar, highly volatile part of the Middle East. Despite the recent push towards the resumption of peace talks (either direct or indirect) between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority, the situation is becoming more and more unsustainable. The vested interests of many other actors and the relation between the situation in Palestine and the geopolitical equilibrium in the whole Middle East do not facilitate the solution to the Palestinian problem. The humanitarian needs of the Palestinians will continue to require accrued attention and support from its partners for at least many years to come.

The Palestine RC will continue to play a key role, as the only Palestinian institution able today to work in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and for the refugees in Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. Its recent developments and its growing focus on community work, together with its ability and openness towards properly coordinated and streamlined cooperation, make Palestine RC a key element of stability and attention to the needs of the vulnerable in this fragile and volatile environment.

All Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to:

Inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

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