

Programme Update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Human resources (HR) management strategy

Appeal No. MAA00034

28 August 2009

This report covers the period 01 January to 30
June 2009



Participants at a meeting of the HR Group for International
Deployment of Delegates, in March 2009 in Canada.
International Federation

In brief

Programme purpose: To build and consolidate a coherent Federation human resources strategy to support the organisation's capacity to deliver and achieve its goals.

Programme summary: During the first half of 2009, progress was made in the HR development programme's four strategic areas of work:

- **Establishing effective HR management at zone level**

The Global HR team met in April and this forum reviewed the key HR policies, procedures and processes to ensure that same standards are used globally to maintain a coherent HR management global approach. Further, the employee well-being system was decentralised to two zones. The remuneration and benefits system for national professionals in the Europe zone was also finalised.

- **Developing the organisation's international management capability**

The assessment centre approach was reviewed and a review report with recommendations for the future was tabled to the new senior management team. The international manager learning journey, established last year, is in progress.

- **Developing staff profiles to deliver the new operating model**

A new competency framework was drafted. The moving forward together process has resulted in redefinition of business functions and rightsizing of the secretariat to reflect the balance of work between the secretariat in Geneva and in the zones. Rotation of staff to

places where they are most needed is a key component and, to enable this, a working group was set up to review the staff rules and regulations. In addition, work was begun on reviewing rotation policies of other organisations.

- **Developing a coherent HR management strategy and approach**

The HR global meeting in April 2009 also analysed the new management vision and agreed on a new draft HR strategy which has now been shared with senior management for approval. The HR Group for International Deployment of Delegates, comprising National Societies (NS) that deploy delegates, met in March 2009 in Canada. The main discussion points were on how to work effectively together to empower the zones to maintain set standards and quality of HR management in a decentralised structure. The planning process for the Annual HR seminar to be conducted in September 2009 was launched in June 2009.

Financial situation: The total 2009 budget is CHF 925,134 (USD 852,367 or EUR 606,757), of which CHF 329,475 (36 per cent) covered during the reporting period. Overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 68,004 (7 per cent of the budget and 21 per cent of the income). Expenditure is low against the year to date income and even lower against the annual budget as the implementation of several programme activities was delayed or postponed. This was largely due to the fact that a new senior management team was formed only in April, so the endorsement of plans and decisions was delayed. The majority of activities will take place during the next reporting period.

[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 the International Federation'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 NS and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The International Federation works closely with its HR counterparts in NS in the development and delivery of specific initiatives.

Context

Following the appointment of the International Federation's secretary general in mid-2008, a new vision "Moving Forward Together" was approved. This new vision described how a lean and efficient secretariat could work differently in a dynamic environment with ever increasing needs. The HR global team had a critical analysis of this new vision and agreed on a new draft HR strategy, which was shared with senior management for adoption.

In terms of effective HR management, success in delivering this new vision relies on:

- The ability of secretariat staff in Geneva and the field to work in a new context, viz. enabling and supporting delivery through NS
- Staff in the International Federation as a whole "working better together" with a shared vision and priorities, and
- The development of capabilities of staff to perform effectively

For the HR global team to support the organisation in reaching its goals, the HR function must shift from transaction management to a more strategic role that is recognised, respected and valued.

Progress towards outcomes

Establishing effective HR management at the zone level

Outcome

With the decentralisation of the HR function to the field almost completed in 2008, it was expected that HR information systems would be rolled out to the zones. It was also expected that HR policies and procedures would be reviewed and standards set to maintain a coherent HR approach for all secretariat staff. Further, HR disaster management tools, developed during previous years, would be consolidated and exported to the field.

Achievements

- The global HR team that met in April shared challenges related to the implementation of HR policies and procedures and identified areas for improvement. Further, a field regulations review was completed and is ready to be incorporated into the secretariat staff regulatory policy in line with ILOAT requirements. Recruitment guidelines were also reviewed.
- HR systems are critical to enable effective HR management at the zone level. The HRonline tool, which enables employees to manage their own personnel data and enables managers to view data of their team members, was rolled out to four zones (Southern Africa, West Africa, East Africa and Europe). The new performance management system, as part of the appraisal module in HRonline (SAP), was rolled out to the first two pilot departments in Geneva (HR and Information Systems department). After the completion of the development phase, the appraisal module will be implemented across the entire organisation in September 2009. Reporting has been developed by linking the main HR system 'SAP' with the finance system 'Business Objects', allowing the production of valuable headcount reports. Besides this, features of the e-recruitment tool JobNet were also enhanced to enable reporting on the recruitment process and diversity of applicants.
- The initiative adopted earlier, to develop a roster for heads of operations in an effort to resolve the shortage of these personnel, was recently reviewed. Following this, a proposal was tabled to address this matter in a more strategic and cost efficient way, following best practice in the humanitarian sector for rapidly deployable HR capacities.
- The psychological support programme for International Federation staff was rolled out to two zones: Southern Africa and East Africa. The candidates were interviewed by professional stress counsellors. The experience of initiating this programme has been positive and this will ensure that the needs of local staff and partner NS delegates can be better addressed.
- A remuneration and benefits system was developed for national professionals for Europe zone and new salary bands were put in place for staff in Budapest, Moscow and Almaty. The next step would be applying the same methodology in other locations, including Dakar and Dubai.
- The system to induct new employees was revised to integrate new e-learning courses such as "World of Red Cross" (Introduction to the Movement). The welcome curriculum will be designed as a blended learning package, customized for the specific audience.

Constraints or Challenges

- The pace of implementation of programme activities in the Americas zone has been slower than the other zones as the replacement for the zone HR manager, who left in the middle of 2008, was only completed in February 2009. This also necessitated an intensive induction programme for the new incumbent.
- The Middle East and North Africa zone still remains without an HR manager due to difficulties in resolving the location of the zone office. The transitional manager left at the

beginning of 2009 and the zone HR function was handed back to Geneva. This will mean starting programme activities in the zone again when the HR manager is finally put in place.

- There are operational difficulties with rolling out SAP our main HR information system because of its complexity. A review of SAP and its functionality is now being planned

Developing a coherent HR management strategy and approach

Outcome

It was expected that the Movement would have a common HR approach aligned around its' values and principles. It was also expected that there would be increased understanding and joint HR initiatives through networks of NS HR staff.

Achievements

- The HR global meeting in April analysed the new management vision and agreed on a new draft HR strategy, which was shared with senior management for adoption,
- The HR Group for International Deployment of Delegates, comprising NS that deploy delegates, met in March in Canada. The main discussion points were on how to work effectively together to empower zones to maintain set standards and quality of HR management in a decentralised structure. The next meeting of this group will take place in October 2009 in Geneva.
- The approach to planning for the HR seminar, which is an annual event for HR practitioners in the Movement, was revised to ensure that the content suited the diverse nature of this group. An HR seminar planning group, consisting of various interest groups, was established to plan and facilitate the process of conducting this seminar in October 2009.
- The Europe zone initiated a process, with support from the Swedish Red Cross, to build the HR capacity of NS in the zone and an HR workshop to kick start this activity will be held in September 2009.

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.

Developing international management capability

Outcome

It was expected that a critical mass of international managers that have passed the assessment centre would be fast tracked for development through the international manager learning journey.

Achievements

- With the new senior management in place, the assessment centre approach was reviewed and a review report, with recommendations for the future, was tabled to them. So far, 154 candidates have attended 16 assessment days undertaken in four "one-week" series. Of these candidates, 51 have been appointed into international manager posts.
- It is planned that 40 more people will be assessed during the second half of 2009. The British Red Cross invited the International Federation to participate in their assessment centre in June, which facilitated a learning of best practises.
- The international manager learning journey, established last year, is in progress in the form of coaching sessions. Regular progress reports were provided by the coaches. It is envisaged that, as part of the closure of this journey, a comprehensive review will be done to evaluate the impact on behaviour and improvement in managerial competencies. A

second round of learning journey will be done in the second half of 2009. The process has already been started with the establishment of criteria and selection of participants.

Constraints or Challenges

This activity has been delayed to incorporate new management thinking on assessment centres.

Developing staff profiles to deliver the new operating model

Outcome

It was expected that a new staff profiling approach would be developed to suit the “moving forward together” vision.

Achievements

- A new competency framework was drafted. Based on previous sets of competencies in use within the organization, a consolidated package was presented to senior management. The framework will be finalized based on staff feedback. Feedback will be provided through organization-wide consultation that will take place during the second half of 2009.
- The “moving forward together” process has resulted in redefinition of business functions and a process of right sizing of the secretariat to reflect the balance of work between Geneva and the field. Job descriptions are currently being reviewed and re-classified at the right level. A reassessment of job classifications for field positions is also planned, with the aim to redefine grading and titles in order to place staff with equal roles in the right positions.
- Rotation of staff to places where they are needed most will be a key component. A working group has been set to review staff rules and regulations to enable this to take place. In addition, work to review other organisations’ policies on rotation has begun and it is hoped that a rotation policy will soon be tabled to senior management for consideration.
- Integration of International Federation offices into NS will also be a key element for the new model. There was already an example of how this was implemented in the Americas and more work has been initiated to ensure that this concept is well defined.

Constraints or Challenges

The right sizing of the secretariat will be a very demanding process for the HR team and this may derail the plans of other strategic priorities that had been planned for the remainder of this year.

Working in partnership

A lot of collaboration on HR management is taking place within the Movement, as narrated in this report. Efforts are also being made by the global HR team to learn new HR trends and share best practises. The HR director for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Holland, was invited to the HR global team meeting in April, to share insights from their organisation and discuss the role of HR in managing change. This was highly appreciated by all participants.

In addition, the HR team members attended several seminars, organised by private organisations and headhunters, on strategic HR management. Further, the training and development unit has been actively involved in sessions organized by the Geneva Learning Network where UN organizations share practices and knowledge. A collaboration has also been developed with MSF and OXFAM in the context of the Heads of Operations project (to ensure an increased number of experienced, skilled and competent Head of Operations are available and deployable for the International Federation).

Contributing to longer-term impact

The investment in HR management capacity in the International Federation and in NS is fundamental to assure the delivery of the organisation's goals:

- A clear and well-aligned HR strategy will enable a coherent HR management approach in the International Federation.
- Improved leadership and management in the field will impact directly on service delivery to NS.
- Effective zone HR management will broaden the International Federation's ability to reach out to all people in places of operation, thereby increasing diversity targets.
- The new learning and development approach will enhance the organisation's ability to retain and develop a strong professional talent base.

Looking ahead

Despite some delays to ensure that the new senior management embraces the HR management approach, most of the planned activities for 2009 have been on track based on funds available. Unless new funding is secured, activities will be implemented to realistic levels to match funding availability. Further, due to the right sizing process that may occupy most of the HR team's time, it may be necessary to review and revise planned work in the following areas:

- Rolling out of HR information systems - a clear review of SAP may give a realistic perspective on what can be rolled out and what should still be done centrally.
- HR emergency preparedness may be affected by how the disaster management approach for the organisation is reorganised. It might be necessary to adjust current plans to take any changes into consideration.
- Establishing of HR networks in the zones may be a little overambitious given the many other priorities the zones have at hand.

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.• Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.• Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.• Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.
Contact information	
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