

Report 2006-2007



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Asia Pacific Service Centre / Zone Office

Appeal No. MAA50001
Final Report
02/05/2008

This is the final report for the 2006-07 Appeal. It covers the period 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2007.

In a world of global challenges, continued poverty, inequity, and increasing vulnerability to disasters and disease, the International Federation with its global network, works to accomplish its Global Agenda, partnering with local community and civil society to prevent and alleviate human suffering from disasters, diseases and public health emergencies.



Volunteers from Vietnam Red Cross providing first aid treatment to an accident victim along a busy highway called Highway No.5 near Hanoi city.

In brief

Programmes summary:

This two year reporting period has seen significant changes in the way that the Federation secretariat has organised its humanitarian assistance in the Asia Pacific region. Since July 2007 as part of a world-wide decentralisation process, it set up a Zone Office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia responsible for all programme management and coordination functions throughout the entire region that were previously carried out from its Geneva-based headquarters. This new Zone Office has been integrated into the already well-established Asia Pacific Service Centre (APSC) that has been providing important support functions to Federation regional and country offices for several years. Also created during this period was the new Asia Pacific Disaster Management Unit (APDMU) which is part of a small number of similar centres around the world intended to scale up the Federation's response to major disasters.

This 2006-2007 report focuses on the activities of the various APSC units over the past two years. Not included in this report is a description of the work of the Regional Logistics Unit, also based in the Zone Office in Kuala Lumpur, as this is covered in the Global Disaster report available separately.

Financial situation: Most of the costs of the APSC units and of the Zone Office are covered by the Federation's core budget. However some of the units, notably those covering organisational development and the APDMU sought voluntary funding from donors. The total 2006-2007 appeal budget for this work was CHF 2.78 million (USD 2.49 million or EUR 1.68 million), out of which 52% was covered. Overall expenditure against income for the period was 91%.

[Click on the links to go directly to the attached financial reports:](#)
[2006](#) [2007](#) [2006-2007](#)

No. of people we help: 37 national societies (NSs)

Our Partners: The Zone Office, together with the other Federation regional and country offices in the region, works closely with all the 37 Asia Pacific NSs, as well as all the partner national societies (PNSs) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) counterparts collaborating with these societies. Good working relations are also maintained with government ministries, UN agencies and other international and regional organisations working in the humanitarian field throughout the region

Context

The Asia Pacific region has continued to be the most disaster-prone region in the world. In the two years from 2006 to 2007, the Federation responded to a total of 307 disasters, representing 36% of the total globally. In one month alone, in August 2007, there were 11 major emergency flood and/or cyclone relief operations in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Vietnam, all coordinated by the Asia Pacific Disaster Management Unit with the support of the Zone Office.

Politically, the region as a whole has been relatively stable. However, problems remain in a number of countries which have been experiencing internal conflicts for sometime such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Papua New Guinea, Security has become a more serious issue in some countries, notably Pakistan where the political situation has become more intense over the last two years. In these countries, security problems have made it difficult for the Federation to provide optimum support to the NSs to implement their programmes.

On the economic front, the region has seen continuing major strides being taken in several countries, notably China and India, although overall impressive growth rates and aggregated statistics hide the reality of widening wealth gaps and resulting increased vulnerability for millions trapped below the poverty line.

Within the Federation, the year 2007 marked the beginning of the restructuring at the Federation Secretariat in Geneva and the establishment of the zonal offices as part of the New Operating Model. In the Asia Pacific region, it meant the transitioning of the Asia Pacific Service Centre (APSC) in Kuala Lumpur to the new Federation Secretariat AP Zone Office. Whilst globally the transition period took longer than originally anticipated, the process went reasonably smoothly in the Asia Pacific zone thanks to the fact that several of the newly-created positions could be filled by the already existing incumbents in the APSC. The remaining posts were filled during the first quarter of 2008.

The first activities of the new Zone Office focussed on building an understanding amongst national societies of the aims and objectives of the Federation's New Operating Model and how these linked in to the implementation of Strategy 2010 and the Federation of the Future process. This was achieved through visits to meetings of secretaries generals organised for South East and South Asia, and at a three-day communications workshop organised in Kuala Lumpur for communicators (from 18 national societies) and 10 Federation delegation representatives.

Achievement of objectives:

Organisational and Volunteering Development Unit

Objective:

To ensure a coherent Federation organisational development (OD) support strategy so that all RC/RC Movement OD, volunteering and capacity building counterparts have access to shared knowledge in order to maximize use of local and regional resources to improve national society services to vulnerable people.

Achievements:

The OD and Volunteering Development Unit has become a well-established and appreciated centre for guiding a range of capacity building initiatives being carried out across the entire Asia Pacific region. Work over the past two years has focussed on the following key areas:

- **Development of new systems of knowledge sharing and exchange of best practices across Asia Pacific and with other regions of the world;**

The unit contributed to this by:

- Providing a three-monthly Asia Pacific OD email update to facilitate a community of some 285 OD and capacity building practitioners across all components of the Movement in the region to discuss strategic issues and develop best practices;
- uploading of the Asia Pacific OD, capacity building and volunteering CD Rom and Capacity Building Fact Sheets onto the Asia Pacific OD FedNet page to allow online access and immediate updating of contents; and, in 2007, accepting offers from 11 new NSs to generate new Capacity Building Fact Sheets to share their best practices with other NSs;
- participating in OD planning missions in multi-stakeholder Movement partner contexts such as Tibet province in China, Sri Lanka and the Maldives; and
- distributing on request to seven NSs the new finance development materials and tools generated by the Asia Pacific Finance Development Forum in February 2007.

The impact of the efforts so far includes the following:

- Nine Asia Pacific NSs strengthened their legal base through shared best practice resources; and
- Eight new and revised strategic plans resulted from knowledge sharing between Asia Pacific NSs.

- **Development of new regional networking and peer support models;**

The first group of 15 NS peer practitioners to provide mutual coaching and mentoring and explore non-delegate models of OD support has been identified. Templates for a zone-wide database for external retainer and consultancy-based support to ensure the delivery of cross-culturally appropriate OD support has been developed.

It is noteworthy that several peer practitioners from NSs in the Asia Pacific region have been recruited as Federation delegates in recent operations. This has expanded the human resource pool of trained personnel from societies within the region. It offers the peer practitioner network access to experienced NS personnel who can strengthen a “non-delegate” model of peer support to other NSs after their return from international missions.

- **Improvement of approaches to ensure quality OD support at country and local level;**

This was achieved through:

- “team building” forums of Asia Pacific Federation OD delegates meetings in February 2007 and February 2008;
- sharing the OD support strategy, which will be finalised in early 2008, with the ICRC at Asia Pacific region level and involvement in ICRC Regional Cooperation Strategy development;
- coaching and mentoring of Federation OD colleagues through targeted OD support, at the request of NSs as well as Federation country and regional offices in 16 countries, including 14 NSs who showed interest in volunteer management and development, such as the Solomon Islands, Philippines, Vietnam and China; and
- provision of support to PNSs asking for strategic feedback on OD evaluations and reviews (such as Canadian Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross and Australian Red Cross).

- **Development and sharing of innovative approaches and tools to measure the impact of OD and capacity building work at country and local level;**

One of the tools is the “Impact Spider” generated by 14 NSs in the Asia Pacific region in 2004 to better document impact of OD and capacity building work on vulnerable communities. Three further “Impact Spiders” helping to measure the impact of finance development work on improved services to vulnerable people were promoted and shared with NSs over the past two years.

Institutions/donors such as DFID who used the Asia Pacific OD impact measurement model expressed their appreciation for the tool in a recent DFID review of disaster management and OD integration in Cambodia. Several countries, including Cambodia, Mongolia, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), also reported improved measurement of numbers of vulnerable people benefiting from services as a result of capacity building work, through the use of this tool.

- **Development of new ways and tools to integrate OD and CB work in all core programmes;**

This involves strengthening approaches to integrated programming which enables the Global Agenda goals to be delivered in a holistic manner to vulnerable communities in a wider risk reduction framework at the community level. These included the following:

- During a "South Asia NS Forum on Integrated Approaches" in 2007, each of the NSs generated an "Integrated Approach Framework" to guide the capacity building and OD components of all programmes in future relief and development programmes;
- supporting peer visits between NSs working on integrated programme approaches, such as the visit between DPRK RC and Nepal RC;
- advocacy and programme support work to capture best practice lessons and recommendations for future initiatives on OD and capacity building within emergency appeals;
- modelling of best integrated practices by attending all core programme forums across the Asia Pacific region, and documenting and disseminating best practice case studies which are used actively at both regional and global levels.

- **Active utilisation of an in-house consultancy service on volunteering development;**

Efforts towards this direction included:

- an agreed "Volunteering Development Framework" which all Asia Pacific NSs helped to create;
- a volunteering development toolbox of best practice guidelines, policies and manuals developed by many Asia Pacific NSs in their own cultural contexts. This is included in the Asia Pacific OD CD-Rom, FedNet site and Capacity Building Fact Sheet folders;
- promoting the Federation Insurance Scheme for Volunteers which has generated much interest but few takers so far among NSs due mainly to financial constraints. A review of the global insurance scheme is now being carried out to make it more suited to NS conditions and requirements;
- undertaking a pioneering research programme which resulted in a set of good practices on "Volunteering in Emergencies (ViE)". These were commended by the "Tsunami Learning Forum" in Kuala Lumpur, and the Federation's General Assembly in November 2007 subsequently adopted the ViE Review's recommendations for the future. This included two draft papers regarding "Financial compensation to volunteers" and "Volunteers affected by disasters" which had been approved earlier by the Federation Governing Board.

Some practical country-level impacts of this support work include:

- new volunteer policies completed or under development in three NSs in the Asia Pacific region;
- five NSs with improved volunteering management procedures; and
- regional workshops to integrate strong volunteering development practices in Health in Emergencies, and Disaster Management forums for NSs.

- **Advancing work on OD in emergencies;**

Efforts in this direction include:

- supporting the South-east Asia NS Disaster Management (DM) Working Group to define "*minimum standards for volunteering management in emergencies in South East Asia*", and contributing to similar discussions by NSs in other regions and zones;
- writing new global volunteering capacity building training modules for DM mechanisms such as Field Assessment and Coordination Teams (FACTs) and Emergency Response Units (ERUs) as part of the aim to increase the quality of "OD in emergencies" work; and
- ensuring OD and capacity building inputs have also been made to emergency operation task forces on cyclones, earthquakes and tsunami alerts, and NSs are increasingly encouraged to include a capacity building budget line in all emergency appeals across the zone.

- **Advocacy for improved gender sensitive programming and structures within NS programmes.**

This is being achieved through:

- promotion of the "Gender Matrix" tool developed by the Australian RC;
- promoting the implementation of the South Asia "Women Volunteers Report 2006";
- production and dissemination of two new Capacity Building Fact Sheets on gender (one summarising the findings of the South Asia report, and the other documenting and advocating for measurable results of well-planned gender work in Nepal RC) to inspire other NSs to initiate similar work;
- production of a flow chart "15 easy steps to improve your programmes with a gender perspective";
- inclusion of a specific section on gender sensitive approaches, tools, policies and guidelines in the Asia Pacific OD CD-Rom which has been uploaded on the Asia Pacific OD FedNet site; and
- introduction of a plan to initiate a new NS network of four gender focal persons (one in each part of the Asia Pacific region) in 2008 who will help to facilitate a process to gradually increase gender sensitive programming and gender-balanced institutional structures.

Constraints or challenges:

Some cross-regional knowledge sharing activities between youth, gender, resource mobilisation, and volunteering sub-regional networks could not be carried out due to a lack of sufficient funds and changed strategies at sub-regional level.

There is a need to improve regular collective communication mechanisms between the zone and all sub-regional teams as the technological attempts piloted in 2007 have proved ineffective (as skype connections are not possible, and teleconferences are too expensive for monthly conference calls given budget constraints). New mechanisms will have to be established from 2008 to facilitate improvements in common planning, knowledge sharing, and implementation of OD and volunteering support work.

Asia Pacific Disaster Management Unit

Objective:

All national societies in the Asia Pacific region and the Federation Secretariat are well-prepared to respond to major disasters, and a strategy is in place for the mobilization of regional and global resources.

Achievements:

The Asia Pacific Disaster Management Unit (APDMU) was established in April 2006 as part of the Federation's New Operating Model. The unit started with the appointment of a head of unit and was then strengthened through the recruitment of three disaster management delegates. A Health in Emergencies delegate was appointed in 2007, providing the unit with the capacity to cover health issues in operations.

The unit's priorities for the Asia Pacific region are to:

- maintain a 24/7 disaster monitoring system;
- establish and maintain a dynamic DM resource mapping and database;
- facilitate the establishment of country/sub-regional contingency plans; and
- develop further regional disaster response tools to enhance the effectiveness of response.

In disaster response and preparedness, the APDMU has focused its activities primary on contingency planning and the standardisation of Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT).

The achievements of the unit in the two-year period include:

- completion of the Asia Pacific Disaster Management Strategy paper in October 2006. This was one of the first tasks of the APDMU. The unit facilitated a meeting with national society representatives and

Secretariat staff to discuss the proposed concept of a “Regional Rapid Response Network” (RRRN) to complement existing systems and tools, while filling in gaps in the early phase of disaster response;

- official adoption of the Disaster Management Strategy at the Singapore Conference in December 2006. The Singapore Conference also adopted the summary report from the Tokyo meeting and endorsed APDMU’s priority tasks and the concept of RRRN;
- provision of direct emergency response support to the Solomon Islands earthquake/tsunami operation in April and the Bangladesh floods in June 2006 through the deployment of APDMU staff. On both occasions, the APDMU managed the overall coordination and made significant contributions to the operations;
- development of the “Working Modality in Disaster Management in Asia Pacific” paper which was subsequently issued jointly by the Deputy Director of Disaster Management in Geneva and the Head of Asia Pacific Zone in October 2007. The document provides guidance on how the APDMU relates to other entities in the Federation structure in disaster response;
- playing a leading role in resolution of various issues related to RDRT after the October 2007 RDRT meeting in Geneva;
- aiding in the groundwork necessary for strengthening the Federation’s capacity to meet its global commitment in emergency shelter in the Asia Pacific region. In October 2007, the APDMU, in conjunction with Shelter Department in Geneva and Regional Delegation in Bangkok, assisted with the organisation of an Emergency Shelter Cluster Coordination (ESC) training workshop. This helped boost the roster of those able to serve on shelter cluster teams;
- provision of disaster management, and health sector support and facilitation in various training courses, workshops and conferences. These included RDRT trainings in Singapore and Bali; South-east Asia DM managers training in Bangkok; Cluster contingency workshop in Philippines; South Asia Secretary Generals meeting; regional logistics workshop in October; and the Kuala Lumpur management meeting in October; and
- deployment of staff for FACT missions in the Pakistan floods in July, floods in Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Cyclone SIDR in November 2007.

Constraints and challenges:

Although the initial draft terms of reference (TOR) for the APDMU were completed in December 2006, to-date they have not been finalised. The absence of the TOR has inhibited the overall development of the unit. However, the “Working Modality in Disaster Management in Asia Pacific” paper referred to earlier, has helped clarify the role of the APDMU to some extent.

Another constraint has been the inadequate human resource capacity within the unit. A fully-staffed APDMU will have the following positions: Head of unit, Disaster Management Delegates (3), one delegate each in Emergency Health, Shelter, Recovery, and Water and Sanitation.

Inadequate funding support also constrained the capacity of the APDMU to implement a number of key activities, including: the resource mapping and database; provision of consistent support for training, planning and facilitation; and assistance with the further development of standardised regional disaster response tools. In addition, the zone office telephone communications system was not robust enough to support conference calls. This limitation prevented the APDMU from setting up timely disaster operations conference calls within the vast Asia Pacific region to maintain effective coordination during emergency situations.

Knowledge Sharing Unit

Objective:

A communications unit that facilitates professional information management and the delivery of quality content, and acts as a marketing and resource mobilization reference point for national societies and Federation delegations

Achievements:

From 2006 to 2007, the unit changed its name to “Knowledge Sharing Unit” (KSU) to become a symbiotic part of the Federation’s Web Communications and Knowledge Management Unit in Geneva. The year 2006 saw: the introduction of a brand profile paper for FedNet; integration across platforms (eg DMIS and FedNet); and the gearing up of training of FedNet Editors and FedNet Editor Trainers.

The year 2007 saw the team in Geneva answering the need for the first knowledge sharing meeting with the Asia Pacific region. The KSU also actively canvassed the Secretariat in Geneva on the needs for an end user analysis, as well as the restructuring of FedNet from its navigation to a new CMS. Major changes are not apparent at the moment on FedNet but a new CMS is being profiled, and a new design and structure is being built.

The unit worked very closely with the OD unit at the zone office to use knowledge sharing as a collaborative learning tool. As this working partnership continues, the unit will be able to reach more NSs than it could do on its own.

Specifically, the achievements during the two-year period include:

- training that increased the number of FedNet editors to 34 that allows several national societies and delegations to place their own material directly on to FedNet;
- creation of a pool of ten FedNet editor trainers to enhance FedNet editors training in the region;
- development of working content sharing partnerships between Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, China and the Knowledge Sharing Unit at the Asia Pacific zone office, including the creation of a team online who share knowledge and ideas for further needs on FedNet for Asia Pacific;
- working projects: OD CD-ROM; OD & Knowledge Sharing Plan for Subset Design for Collaborative Learning (draft);
- Drafting of paper on “End User Analysis”; and
- Contributing to the first Knowledge Sharing Meeting in Geneva.

Constraints and challenges:

- There were some delays in response from the global team in Geneva on FedNet issues raised by the KSU, as there are only 3.5 people dedicated to FedNet at the Geneva Secretariat. Without a one-point communication on FedNet, it is difficult to truly create content for the correct target audience
- Further collaboration to work at the NS level with the OD Unit has not been possible as the KSU does not have sufficient funds for joint missions to country offices with the OD delegate.

The KSU has maintained regular communication with the team in Geneva to try and overcome some of the above constraints and challenges. The unit has offered its technical support and assistance to seek solutions to some of the issues.

Best practices and lessons learned:

- The FedNet editors training of trainers programme has been effective. FedNet editors who attended programme have successfully conducted basic FedNet editors training sessions at country level.
- The establishment of a readily available network of FedNet Editors on skype provides a very good help desk for all FedNet editors in the Asia Pacific region.
- Eventually, as more FedNet editors are trained and the network of these editors grows, FedNet editors training simply needs to be compiled into a CD; and
- For the future, any issue that concerns “end users” should be driven with a concept paper, followed by an end-user analysis paper and a user acceptance test, before it is launched.

Zone Finance Unit

Objective:

Provide professional and technical support to the Federation delegations in improving the standard of financial management in the region.

Achievements:

As part of the establishment of the Zone Office in July 2007, the well-established Regional Finance Unit was renamed Zone Finance Unit (ZFU). However its activities have remained essentially the same, providing comprehensive support and guidance to delegations in the field, resulting in sound overall financial management in the region. This support consisted of the following:

- technical support to field finance staff to ensure timeliness and accuracy of monthly returns, and compliance with financial procedures. This included providing direct stop-gap support on a needs basis;
- financial management information and support to technical managers periodically and on ad-hoc basis when deemed necessary;
- training to raise the level of financial awareness in the Asia Pacific region; and
- financial management support to operations without secretariat's in-country presence.

More specifically, this support consisted of:

- 14 training workshops for programme managers from country offices and national society staff, which helped to improve the overall financial accounting, management and reporting of Federation and national society funds;
- finance training for finance staff of Swedish RC, Norwegian RC and Australian RC societies on Federation system, procedure and processes;
- a finance workshop for 17 finance staff to increase their knowledge and understanding on different financial processes;
- a monthly financial analysis report which was developed and circulated periodically to keep programme managers informed of the financial issues and risks to enable them to take immediate remedial action, when needed, to improve the financial situation and eliminate the risks or financial exposure

In all, a total of 81 finance staff in the country offices, 11 delegates and 70 national staff were provided technical support by the ZFU.

Measurable impact:

The technical support provided by the ZFU has helped to enhance the overall level of knowledge and skills in financial monitoring and management within the Federation. This has led to the following measurable impacts:

- expenditures were in line with planned budgets and activities with approved expenditure ceiling, and no exposures on the funding plan;
- timely financial reporting to donors and continuous monitoring on pledge-based financial statement;
- smooth monthly cash transfer of funds to delegations to enable delegations and NSs to implement their activities on time;
- the Asia Pacific region achieved zero deficit, an achievement which has been maintained over the last eight years; and
- Overall, all financial audits generated clean audit reports, with no major or significant audit findings.

This achievement is remarkable for a region with an annual appeal turnover of CHF60 million and an emergency appeal turnover of CHF300 million (excluding Tsunami), demonstrating the extent of improved financial control in the Asia Pacific region.

Constraints or challenges

There were no major constraints during the period. However, a constant challenge has been the maintenance of adequate human resources in the field due to the constant high staff turnover. Another issue was that it was not always the most qualified and experienced who were appointed to fill vacant finance

positions in the field. These positions were sometimes filled by inexperienced or less qualified appointees from partner national societies who can bear the full cost of these appointees.

Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Unit

Objective:

Federation programmes and services in Asia Pacific are effectively reported on and profiled through improved quality control, standards and procedures, and enhanced reporting capacities.

Achievements:

In the last two years the zone Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) unit (formerly the Regional Reporting Unit) has facilitated the Federation's planning and appeal process for both development programmes and emergency relief operations in the Asia Pacific region. The Asia Pacific zone, as a whole, has the most numbers of appeals and reports among the zones within the Federation. Despite this large number, the unit made sure as far as possible that the documents met minimum Federation standards and requirement, and were processed and posted on the Federation website or sent to donors in a timely manner. Over the two years, the unit's capacity development work has shifted from reporting to PMER development, in line with the growing emphasis on performance and accountability within the Federation. Many initiatives were undertaken to build the capacity of PMER focal points and programme managers in the country offices and NSs.

Annual plan and appeal process

The zone PMER unit successfully coordinated and facilitated the 2006-07 and 2008-09 planning cycles in the Asia Pacific region. The unit liaised closely with the PMER unit in Geneva and the ZFU on the planning guidance and templates, and clarified these with regional and country offices in the region. The unit then worked closely with the field to finalise the country and regional plan and appeals. On the whole, all plans and appeals were posted by the dateline. The unit also successfully processed the large number of programme updates and annual reports and posted them on the web.

Emergency appeal process

The large number of emergency appeals launched for the Asia Pacific region confirmed it as the most disaster-prone region in the world. In all, the Federation responded to 307 disasters in the region during the two-year period, representing 36% of the total globally. During the emergencies, the unit worked round-the-clock with the APDMU, ZFU, field offices and the Geneva Secretariat to ensure timely launching of appeals and operations updates on the situation to profile the Red Cross Red Crescent response to the outside world.

Awareness and capacity building

As part of efforts to build PMER expertise in the region, the unit carried out orientation programmes for new PMER delegates and officers from Maldives, Indonesia and the East Asia regional office. Briefings on the Federation's plan and appeal system were also provided to new delegates visiting the Zone Office as part of their induction.

Much progress was achieved in building the capacity of PMER focal points in the country offices and NSs. The unit conducted a number of PMER induction trainings and workshops, particularly for new reporting focal points in the regional/country offices (including Bangladesh, Maldives, Mongolia, Indonesia, Pakistan, South Asia, East Asia) and selected NSs (Nepal, Sri Lanka, DPRK) to enhance their knowledge and skills in PMER. Training on the logical framework approach (LFA) and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was also carried out for programme staff within the zone office, and in several countries, where participants included Federation and NS staff (including Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Nepal). There were also other initiatives, including the unit's FedNet reporting one-stop shop (<https://fednet.ifrc.org/sw85581.asp>) for knowledge-sharing, as well as staff-on-loan attachments with the unit to enable the staff-on-loan to gain experience by working with the unit on a daily basis for a period of one to two weeks. The unit also promoted the Federation Effective Writing

Course among PMER focal points and programme managers, and sponsored a number of them for the course.

Direct support

As part of its mandate to ensure timely and effective reporting and profiling of the Federation's programmes in the region, the zone PMER unit made a number of visits during each of the last two years to regional and country offices to provide assistance to compile appeals and updates and help build capacity at the same time through mentoring. The unit also supported the Bangladesh Cyclone SIDR FACT to develop the full emergency appeal, which was launched within first week of the disaster.

Constraints and challenges

i) reports-due list;

To remind field delegations of upcoming reports, the unit has tried to maintain a reports-due list. Unfortunately, as the list on the FMR has not been regularly updated and contains inaccuracies, the zone PMER unit has had to compile the list manually, requiring much time and effort due to the need to confirm the status of many reports with relevant parties. It is expected that the problem will be resolved in 2008 once the zone PMER unit is provided the authority and takes over the task of ticking off reports which have been either posted on the Federation website or sent to donors.

ii) quality of reports from the field;

While the PMER development efforts have had some impact, the quality of reports from a number of countries have remained at an unsatisfactory level, thus requiring much editing work by the unit before they are posted or sent to donors.

Information Systems Unit

Objective:

To enhance IT and telecommunications capacity within the network of Federation field offices and national societies in the Asia Pacific region.

Achievements:

The unit was initially set up as the IT and Telecommunications unit in 2006. In June 2007, it was officially re-designated as the Zone Information Systems Unit (ZISU) after Kuala Lumpur was selected as the Federation zone office for the Asia Pacific region. In this new mandate, the unit has been primarily tasked to plan and manage the implementation of IT and telecommunications policies, procedures and services throughout the region. It has a coordination role to ensure that the region's field IT and telecommunications needs are reviewed and fulfilled in a timely manner.

The unit represents a critical linkage between the Secretariat's technology arm and the requirements of the zone and field offices. Headed by a regional manager, the unit expanded to include a network administrator in early 2007 to provide additional services to the zone centre.

In the last two years, the unit successfully implemented standard ISD platform in the zone centre and performed several technical assessments in selective field offices in order to identify, review and provide recommendations for improvements for field offices and national societies. In the case of Federation field offices, the unit has continuously provided support through remote coordination and regular on-site visits. However, interactions with national societies have been mostly at an ad hoc basis and involve technical support services in the form of consultancy and sharing of best practises.

Specifically, the achievements include the following:

- a) Successful implementation of Asia Pacific zone IT setup in 2007 to support the new zone office structure and the increasing IT needs in the zone office. Amongst others, the deployment included the selection of Internet Service Provider for Leased Line service through competitive bidding and technical

evaluation, infrastructure provisioning to accommodate additional zone office employee placement and relocation of the server room to a new location that strictly adheres to Federation standard equipment room policies;

- b) Implementation of an integrated Voice over IP telephony and Active Directory System at the zone office to introduce optimum control, cost reduction and organized help desk service;
- c) Initiation of a proposal to organize a forum to enhance programs and services through ICT in the region. The forum is planned to be a joint effort between Federation Zone Office and the Malaysian Red Crescent Society. The forum is foreseen for second quarter of 2008, with participation of national societies in the region, as well as selected PNSs;
- d) Other IT and telecommunications operational achievements in the region include:
 - ❖ Fiji and Papua New Guinea: Switchover to a new ISP and IT support company has been recommended based on cost reduction, improved quality of service and value-added services;
 - ❖ East Asia Regional office, Cambodia & Vietnam: Assessment, audit and improvement of IT infrastructure to align with recommended Federation policies and procedures;
 - ❖ Philippines: Continued support for the establishment of new IT architecture for the Philippines National Red Cross Society. The national society has embarked on a 5-year plan to revamp and enhance their capabilities via a virtual network across the many branches and sub branches;
 - ❖ Thailand: Assessment, audit and improvement of IT infrastructure through site visit, remote coordination and staff exchange training program;
 - ❖ Myanmar: Development of network procedures and infrastructure document for future reference. Efforts are in progress to increase the reliability, efficiency and effectiveness of communication mode through the assistance of local IT personnel. Access to the Federation public FTP site is being negotiated with the service provider and at the same time, a pilot Lotus Notes trial via web interface was completed successfully;
 - ❖ DPRK: In September 2007, a new internet circuit by KCCKP was integrated into the network in order to ensure direct unlimited access to Federation web sites. Besides that, the gradual phasing out of stand alone CODA finance system was completed with the final approval obtained from the NS in November 2007;
 - ❖ India: Introduction of Microsoft Finance software Navision in India Red Cross, a project which was fully-funded by the India country office and currently in the evaluation stage prior to awarding to system integrator; and
 - ❖ Nepal: Establishment of working relationship with Nepal Red Cross in view of their extended 3-year IT improvement plan.
- e) Continuous support to Federation's disaster management function by providing technical assistance in IT and telecommunications, including technical evaluation of satellite-based solutions for quick deployed communications, maintenance of emergency telecommunications stock, procurement of IT and telecommunications equipment and technical consultancy; and
- f) Daily operational support to all Federation offices in the region, either through direct liaisons with IT support companies or coordination with Federation IT staff in the field.

Constraints or challenges

Funding is a major problem for some NSs, leaving their IT infrastructure in a poor state and in much need of improvement. Due to the unavailability of standards or poor enforcement, IT equipment in several countries is loaded with illegal software and is not readily protected from security issues. Another key issue is the lack of competent staff to maintain the IT or telecommunications network.

Best practices and lessons learned

The Federation's ISD unit is applying the standards of best practice known as ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) to ensure quality and efficient management of IS systems in zone office. The same standards are also applicable at field offices and therefore, efforts are ongoing to train local IT staff to implement the same set of standards.

Contributing to longer-term impact

All OD, capacity building and volunteering activities worked towards an effective integrated programming approach to improve and scale up services and programmes to the vulnerable with measurable results achieved through strengthened approaches to monitoring and evaluation. Gender and equity perspectives were also strengthened through OD and volunteering reviews and evaluations. The Asia Pacific OD coordinator, through facilitation of the “Tsunami Lessons Learned” review, contributed to the Federation Governing Board resolutions to revise and update the Code of Conduct for the RC/RC Movement and NGOs in disaster relief to better integrate perspectives on OD issues within emergencies as well as improved volunteer management.

The APDMU worked within the new holistic approach for disaster management and integrated this change of thinking in its support for disaster operations and review of report documents such as emergency appeals, operation objectives in the plan of action, operational updates, DMIS, etc. Together with the zone PMER unit, the APDMU worked to assure that all reports and response plan of actions included: the latest thinking and trends in public health in emergency; consideration of humanitarian values; inclusion of early recovery objectives; recognition of the work of the NS in response; and information about the NSs work in community-based preparedness, recovery and emergency volunteer programs.

The zone PMER unit is playing a significant role by helping to streamline existing planning and reporting procedures, standards and formats to align better with the Federation’s Framework for Action, Global Agenda goals, and to focus on quality and accountability. PMER development and capacity building activities of the unit have contributed to the general increase in awareness of the importance of good PMER to ensure accurate and timely reporting of Federation programmes within the Asia Pacific region.

The setting up of a Service Desk in the zone IT centre will provide immediate technical support to users throughout the region and consequently, it will become an important tool in enhancing IT and telecommunications standards. In the long run, it is within the unit’s objective to implement the same standards within NSs in the region.

Looking ahead

It is anticipated that the Zone Office will be fully staffed by the end of the first quarter of 2008. During this time, efforts will be developed to ensure that a strong working relationship and common objectives are established with all the Federation regional and country offices in the region. The objectives will stress in particular that priority emphasis be given to the delivery of quality programming at the country level and that a higher standard of planning and cooperation is carried out by Federation delegations and bilateral PNS working in the same countries.

In OD, activities planned for 2008 include a coordinated strategy with respective regional delegations to develop a pilot “Leadership development” course and the development of a team of sub-regional gender focal points to better manage gender mainstreaming work at sub-regional as well as zone-wide levels. The next phase of the volunteering development programme will be to consolidate the peer practitioners network and to support volunteering in emergencies initiatives in other zones.

The APDMU is looking forward to a completely-staffed unit with the technical expertise and the monetary resources to allow it to provide comprehensive coordination in disasters that require International leadership. The development of the APDMU will also support the Federations’ New Operating Model with staff in Geneva and in the APDMU working as a single unit.

The PMER unit will focus on revising the working modalities within the zone to build PMER capacity in the country office and NSs to ensure more timely processing of appeals and reports, and on enhancing M&E processes within Federation-supported programmes with NSs.

More details of future plans are found in [Appeal 2008-09](#).

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering quality and accountable assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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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