

# Programme Update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## China

Appeal No. MAACN001

9 August 2008

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



The executive vice president of the Red Cross Society of China represented the Red Cross when she carried the torch in the Olympic torch relay. **RCSC**

## In brief

**Programmes summary:** In the first half of 2008, China was hit by a number of serious disasters, the most devastating of which was the 8.0 magnitude earthquake to hit Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi. Severe cold weather and snow storms also greatly affected the nation during the Chinese New Year holiday, and flooding from torrential rains and typhoons continue to threaten much of the southern regions now. The Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) has reacted swiftly to all these disasters, and their capacity has been enhanced with support from the International Federation and other partners. Many of the annual programme activities have been delayed due to the earthquake relief efforts, and it is expected that many will be resumed in the second half of the year.

The ongoing community-based disaster preparedness project in Hubei, supported by the Finnish Red Cross, has completed its first year of activities and is considering the proposals for the second year. Previously selected villages have conducted vulnerability and capacity assessments, set up village level Red Cross branches, established community-based disaster preparedness committees and contingency plans, as well as built biogas latrines and conducted trainings in schools and the communities.

The RCSC launched its HIV Global Alliance on 28-29 March with a national workshop for all branches and partners. The International Federation has brought on a new delegate to support the alliance and many activities have already commenced, including trainings and the publication of a peer training manual. The regional health delegate participated in an impact evaluation of the Australian Red Cross project in Xinjiang providing interesting results showing the positive impact of the project.

Avian influenza projects have been delayed due to the 12 May earthquake, as both Sichuan and Gansu, project areas, were affected. A wrap-up meeting was held earlier in the year and 38 participants from the seven provinces attended to share experiences and lessons learned.

Following on the announcement that 2008 would be the year of organizational development at grassroots level, the RCSC is conducting in-depth assessments at multiple branches throughout the country to gain baseline knowledge on the capacities at branch levels. Humanitarian values continue to be at the forefront of International Federation supported programming, and a part-time communications consultant has worked with the RCSC to promote its valuable work to international media and within the Red Cross Movement.

**Financial situation:** The total (2008) budget is CHF 2,087,551 (USD 1,954,619 or EUR 1,283,493), of which 27 percent covered. Expenditure overall was 8.2 percent.

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

See also China Floods Emergency Appeal and China Earthquake Emergency Appeal: MDRCN003

**No. of people we help:** It is difficult to estimate the total number of beneficiaries in RCSC programmes supported by the International Federation. During this reporting period, branch staff and volunteers were directly benefited by support of the international Federation through multiple trainings and capacity building initiatives. Project implementation was low in the first half of the year, and beneficiary numbers were not gathered in time for this report due to the earthquake operation.

**Our partners:** The RCSC coordinates closely with the ministry of health and civil affairs at local and national levels, ensuring that Red Cross activities are focused in areas where they have greater impact and cooperation from the local governments. Local organizations and community groups are important local partners for implementing activities, as well as reaching groups that might otherwise be difficult to access, such as men who have sex with men and minority communities. The RCSC also participates in collaborative efforts with other stakeholders and organizations working in related fields, such as UNAIDS, UNICEF, and WHO. The RCSC has an active programme of international cooperation with other members of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, including its special autonomous branches in Hong Kong and Macao, the American, Australian, Canadian, Netherlands, Norwegian, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The launch of a HIV Global Alliance in China will bring together many Red Cross partners, as well as non-Red Cross partners, under one programme strategy and plan of action devised by the RCSC.

## Context

The first half of 2008 has brought on many new challenges for China. The much anticipated Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held in Beijing and many other cities across the nation in the months of August and September. Although the nation has been preparing for years, all the excitement and last minute preparations culminate in the countdown during the past few months. The RCSC has been actively preparing for the Games, as the primary trainer of first aid to all Olympic volunteers.

In the midst of the Olympic frenzy, a series of major disasters have devastated large areas of the country. The first was an unusual snow storm with extremely low temperatures that blanketed 20 out of 31 of the country's provinces in the southern and central region. It was considered the worst winter disaster in more than five decades in most areas and the longest lasting blizzard in 100 years. In the most severely affected areas, basic infrastructure such as roads, communication lines, water supplies and electricity facilities were damaged or destroyed.



Red Cross Olympic volunteers immediately turned their efforts towards the earthquake when disaster struck on 12 May in Wenchuan county, Sichuan province. **RCSC**

This disaster was particularly difficult as it hit during the most important travel holiday in China, the Chinese New Year, stranding millions of passengers in railway stations and airports. The RCSC and its



Hunan Red Cross delivered relief on foot as many roads had been cut off. **RCSC.**

branches responded immediately by mobilizing volunteers and relief goods, sometimes on foot due disruption in transportation. The RCSC headquarters launched a national appeal and sent five assessment teams to the affected areas. The International Federation office in Beijing issued information bulletins and supported the RCSC on response activities.

Not long after the snow melted away and infrastructure was repaired, an 8.0 magnitude earthquake struck Wenchuan county in Sichuan province, causing devastation in an area of 440,000 square kilometres. At least 70,000 were killed with thousands still missing, and five million left homeless. The Sichuan Red Cross branches of the RCSC were some of the very first responders in the epicentre and

surrounding areas. Relief goods and volunteers were dispatched, and people across the nation joined the efforts in an unprecedented outpouring of donations and volunteerism. The RCSC national headquarters coordinated relief goods from their disaster preparedness warehouses and provided support to all affected areas.

The International Federation launched an emergency appeal to support the RCSC. Five emergency response units, including a field hospital, two water and sanitation units, one mass sanitation unit and a base camp unit, all of which are being handed over to the RCSC. 100,000 tents have been mobilised from all over world and were transported to the affected areas. A detailed assessment was conducted to identify the immediate and long term recovery needs. For more information on this operation, please refer to the Emergency Appeal and latest updates.

Immediately after the earthquake hit, rains began to pelt the southern region of China, including earthquake affected Sichuan. In many areas, the rains were severe and deadly. Fears of flash floods and landslides were impeding the rescue efforts and while relief workers were already at maximum capacity, the ensuing rain only brought more challenges and obstacles. With disaster preparedness warehouses depleted after two major disasters, the RCSC was struggling to provide immediate relief goods to flood victims.

Although the Olympics symbolize a major step forward in China's development and role in the international scene, there are many who are still struggling in poverty. While the government recognizes this and attempts to provide assistance, it is never enough when faced with disasters of this magnitude. Those hit by disasters – for some, three times in a row this year – are either thrown deep into poverty with the loss of their home, loss of livelihood, loss of income generating family members, and no land on which to rebuild. Many migrate to the cities looking for better opportunities, only to be excluded from social welfare benefits and leaving behind the most vulnerable family members: the elderly, children and the disabled.

To compound this, public health threats continue to plague China, especially in rural areas where those most vulnerable populations reside. The ongoing regional outbreak of hand, foot and mouth disease (Enterovirus 71) has affected China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Five years into the continued epizootic of avian influenza (H5N1) in poultry, avian influenza remains a constant public health threat to China, with sporadic transmissions to human. According to the WHO, as of 31 May 2008, China has reported a total of 30 cases of avian influenza (H5N1) in humans with 20 of those cases resulting in death (case fatality rate 67 percent). The most recent cases occurred in a space of one week in February this year, in three southern provinces of Guangdong, Hunan and Guangxi. All three people died - a possible indication of belated diagnosis by health services and/or low self-referrals to health services by people if sick with flu-like symptoms. Two of those who died were farmers and one was a migrant worker.

The silent disaster caused by the HIV virus continues to threaten the lives of thousands in China each year. Due to stigma and discrimination surrounding the disease, many vulnerable populations, especially those marginalized groups are at risk of contracting and spreading the disease due to a lack of knowledge and recognition of the disease.

The RCSC, with support of the International Federation, continues to work with communities to stop the spread of diseases, such as HIV, through trainings, community-based activities and the promotion of humanitarian values. The development of the RCSC's organizational strengths is also a key component of the RCSC's work in scaling up and meeting the needs of those most vulnerable.



The British Red Cross mass sanitation emergency response unit team discusses locations for latrines with the local community. May 2008. RCSC.

## Progress towards outcomes

### Disaster management

#### Outcomes/Expected results

Programme component	Component outcome
1. Disaster response capacity building	RCSC disaster response capacity is strengthened
2. Community preparedness and mitigation	Vulnerable communities have the capacity to plan and implement appropriate risk reduction initiatives

#### Achievements

With a string of serious disasters striking China in the first half of 2008, the RCSC has been a key responder on the ground in each affected area. The unique situations posed by the disasters enabled the RCSC to build its experiences and capacities at both branch and headquarters level.

For the first time, the RCSC has welcomed in emergency response units into a disaster zone. The training for counterparts on emergency response units operations has provided an opportunity for the RCSC to look into creating their own emergency response units for both domestic and international deployment.

The International Federation and other partner national societies working with the RCSC on the earthquake operation have been instrumental in building the capacities of staff and volunteers of the RCSC. This will be ongoing as the operation is carried out over the next three years.

Also during this report period, the 2007 floods operation recovery phase has continued. The reconstruction of 330 houses supported from the emergency appeal has been completed in Hubei and Henan provinces in the beginning of April. The RCSC and International Federation conducted a final monitoring trip in April to the areas and saw that all 330 families have moved into the new houses.

After a detailed community assessment, Chongqing, Henan and Anhui provinces have been selected for the implementation of community-based disaster preparedness projects. Communities will be mobilised and work together with the local Red Cross branches to develop community risk mapping, through the vulnerability and capacity assessment training, and develop a community action plan to reduce the potential risks within their environment. By the end of the reporting period, each community had commenced their community-based disaster preparedness activities in all three provinces, but due to the snow storms and earthquake disasters, the process has been delayed.

The planned activities of the annual RCSC disaster management programmes supported by the International Federation have been affected by the disasters in the first half of 2008. The community-based disaster preparedness project in Hubei province supported by the Finnish Red Cross has completed its first year grant in the communities of Yichang and Xiangfan prefectures. The project ran from spring 2007 to spring 2008, with all planned activities completed in early 2008.



The International Federation's support to the RCSC's community-based disaster preparedness projects will enable Huangjing village in Chongqing to fix and upgrade their water irrigation facilities. April 2008. **International Federation.**

The vulnerability and capacity assessment has been conducted in both prefectures, the community disaster preparedness committees have been established and contingency plans have also been developed. Through community-based disaster preparedness, village level Red Cross branches have been set up and 60 villagers have become Red Cross volunteers. These village Red Cross branches have organized trainings in local schools, in which students learned knowledge about disaster preparedness, self protection in emergencies and basic first aid, etc. Local villagers also received training and village level contingency plans for flash floods have been developed with the facilitation of the village branch of the Red Cross. All 423 households in the project areas have finished their biogas latrines as part of the mitigation measures and this will not only improve local water and

sanitation conditions, but also reduce destruction of local vegetation since villagers will have an alternative energy source to replace the usage of wood for fuel. In addition, the local government has contributed funding to build evacuation paths and enhance the river embankments as part of the support to this community-based disaster preparedness programme.

Proposals for the second year grant have been received and are currently under discussion. Activities will fully resume in the second half of 2008.

### Constraints or Challenges

Although the RCSC's capacity to respond to disasters is high, severe disasters, such as the ones to hit China in the first half of 2008, challenge the RCSC's ability to continue implementation of annual programme activities. The RCSC does put great importance on these disaster preparedness programmes, and will continue to look at ways to use these disasters as an opportunity to increase knowledge and capacities within the organization.

## Health and care

### Outcomes/Expected results

Programme component	Component outcome
1. HIV/AIDS	At least one percent of targeted population (youth, people living with HIV, injecting drug users, men who have sex with men, and men and women sex workers) have skills and knowledge to prevent HIV
	At least one percent of targeted population have demonstrated reduced stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and their families

	by showing greater compassion and social acceptance for those affected by HIV
2. Avian influenza	<p>AI activities are mainstreamed into existing RCSC health activities in provinces increasing the level of awareness on AI prevention among the general population</p> <p>Communities who are particularly at risk to avian influenza in some 21 villages in seven provinces possess increased knowledge about avian influenza prevention through targeted health education</p> <p>RCSC has increased capacity to carry out avian influenza prevention programmes, monitoring and evaluation</p>

## Achievements

### HIV/AIDS

The RCSC has successfully launched its HIV Operational Alliance as part of the International Federation's Global Alliance on HIV/AIDS. To kick off the launch, the RCSC organized a national workshop on March 28-29, gathering together over 100 representatives from all 34 provincial and municipality Red Cross branches, international partners and the International Federation secretariat. The event was presided over by the RCSC president, a strong statement of the highest level commitment of RCSC to address HIV issues with renewed force. The event was covered extensively in international and national media.

Starting from late April, the regional office has recruited one additional staff responsible for supporting the RCSC's HIV programme. The delegate is based at the RCSC headquarters and will work on day to day basis with the RCSC HIV programme team.

Together with a consultant hired by the Australian Red Cross, the regional health delegate has conducted an impact evaluation of the Australian Red Cross funded RCSC HIV projects in the Xinjiang Uigur autonomous region.

The Red Cross Society of China, in partnership with UNAIDS, UNV, Youth League and Marie Stopes International China has recently conducted a series of trainings on HIV prevention including stigma and discrimination for 75,000 Olympic volunteers in China. The training was part of the volunteers' preparations for the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games. The HIV training was conducted with a view to sensitize volunteers on the potential risks of HIV transmission and to give them adequate understanding on how to deal with stigma and discrimination. The training helped volunteers to understand HIV and its relation to other cross-cutting issues, and prepared them adequately to be able to work as peer support volunteers for HIV prevention during the Olympics. The training sessions thoroughly discussed HIV prevention, treatment, care and support including anti-stigma and anti-discrimination issues, using participatory methods and fun games. Under the training programme, about 7,500 volunteers received HIV training, and about 100,000 volunteers received HIV prevention messages through information education and communication materials. Most of the volunteers were students from different colleges and universities in Beijing. The trainings were conducted in 15 university campuses in Beijing. Each training team consisted of five trainers including a person living with HIV, who collectively contributed to the achievement of the training goal. The participation of persons living with HIV gave an important dimension to the training and provided real-life experiences for everyone to learn by. The Youth League and all participating volunteers were immensely impressed by the training. As a result of the successful training, the training team had received an additional request for the training of 2,000 volunteers.

The RCSC has conducted an intensive participatory training of trainers on HIV prevention, care and support in the Xiedao conference centre in Beijing. The training was part of the RCSC and China HIV



The RCSC held its first national workshop on the HIV Operational Alliance strategy on March 28-29. Participants from all branches of the RCSC along with partners and the International Federation attended. **International Federation.**



Participants actively work together to find solutions to critical issues during the training of trainers on HIV prevention, care and support in Beijing in late June. **RCSC**

alliance capacity building plan for 2008. A total of 23 trainers from 19 provinces attended the training. The training agenda included a range of issues related to HIV prevention, care and support including stigma and discrimination. In addition to HIV and other cross-cutting issues, the participants received a number of behaviour change communication skills on HIV prevention, care and support. The training of trainers was facilitated by a group of trainers from in and outside the RCSC. As per the RCSC's plan, the newly trained project staff will greatly contribute to the implementation of the nationwide HIV programme in China. The training of trainers started on 22 June and ended on 2 July, 2008.

The RCSC has published a series of peer education training manuals in March 2008. The manuals are to be used by facilitators to train targeted peers educators at the grassroots level so that they can reach their peers. The manuals contain a set of guidelines and references for effective peer education training on HIV with the various target groups. The manuals were developed based on four themes: youth peer education, girls peer education, peer education for injecting drug users and core knowledge on peer education.

Reducing stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and their families are an integral part of the HIV prevention work of the RCSC. A range of activities have been undertaken to reduce stigma and discrimination across the country from January to June 2008. During the most recent training of trainers conducted on 22 June - 2 July in Beijing, stigma and discrimination were included as one of the important areas of discussions. A total of 23 HIV project staff received a day-long training on stigma and discrimination.

The RCSC has adopted Greater Involvement of People Living with AIDS (GIPA) principles in its HIV work. As a part of GIPA, a number of people living with HIV and AIDS were invited to attend the HIV alliance launch event in March 2008. As a mechanism to reduce stigma and discrimination, the GIPA principles were also adopted in the nationwide scaled up the HIV programme.

The newly published peer education manuals have included anti-stigma and discrimination components. A variety of tools, methods, games and messages were included in the manuals on anti-stigma and discrimination.

### **Avian influenza**

The initial plan under this outcome was to implement avian influenza prevention projects in seven provinces in 2008-2009. In early 2008, based on a re-assessment of the funding situation, the plan was revised to cover three provinces in 2008, which include Sichuan, Gansu and Xinjiang Uigur autonomous region. The massive earthquake that struck Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi on May 12 brought to a halt the avian influenza projects in Sichuan and Gansu province until the early 2009. One of the two targeted project communities in Sichuan province (Deyang prefecture) is located 100 kilometres from the earthquake epicentre and has been heavily damaged. Therefore, most of the project implementation in the second half of 2008 will be focused on Xinjiang Red Cross avian influenza activities.

With the support from the regional delegation, the RCSC organized a national avian influenza workshop from April 21 to 23 2008, in Jiayuguan city in Gansu province. A total of 38 participants from all seven provincial Red Cross branches that have implemented avian influenza projects in 2006-2007 (Sichuan, Hunan, Jiangxi, Inner Mongolia, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Gansu) have come together to discuss the project achievements, limitations and long-term strategies to sustain avian influenza activities nationwide. Some of the focus areas the participants have identified for the 2008 project cycle was to improve gender balance of Red Cross volunteers working on avian influenza, selection criteria for targeted villages and volunteer management at lower levels.

The International Federation's avian influenza officer attended the regional community-based avian and human influenza management practitioners' workshop held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 10 to 13 March, 2008. The workshop is one of a series of regional consultation and training events planned under the joint project of the International Federation, CARE, Asian disaster preparedness centre and IRC and focused on strengthening community-based avian and human influenza management. The outcome and resources from this workshop were shared with the RCSC and other regional societies.



The RCSC held an avian influenza project wrap up meeting in Gansu, April 21- 24, 2008. **RCSC**

With the support from the International Federation, the RCSC has compiled all information, education and communication materials, training materials and other tools that have been created in the last two years to facilitate cross-sharing among provinces and standardize the quality of training and public education components for future activities.

### Constraints or Challenges

China has the largest domestic poultry population in the world and avian influenza prevention knowledge among the large rural population of some 740 million people is very low. Securing sufficient funding for avian influenza activities of the RCSC has been difficult. Despite the fact that the RCSC is one of the very few organizations in China that is implementing avian influenza activities at community level, RCSC provincial branches have not been able to secure funding from local health authorities to support their project activities. The RCSC will continue to do more advocacy and awareness rising at national and provincial levels.

The ongoing operations of the RCSC in response to the earthquake of May 12 have diverted RCSC staff working on avian influenza and HIV programmes at national headquarters and provincial Red Cross levels. One of the two project targeted communities for avian influenza activities in Sichuan province (Deyang prefecture) is located 100 kilometres from the earthquake epicentre and has been heavily damaged. Local Red Cross branch staff and volunteers have themselves been affected. Constraints have also been faced by the International Federation regional office as the regional health delegate and avian influenza officer have been deployed for emergency response. Increased health coordination needs are foreseen in the coming months.

## Organizational development

### Outcomes/Expected results

Programme component	Component outcome
1. National society capacity development and organizational development (branch and headquarters)	Selected RCSC provincial branches have strengthened capacity to support newly independent local (country level) branches in Red Cross organizational development and programme management issues
2. Financial management	RCSC finance and programme staff at headquarters and branch levels have acquired increased knowledge and skills in project financial management
3. Volunteer promotion and development	RCSC volunteer base strengthened

## Achievements

Following the RCSC's focus on volunteer development in 2007, the national society has announced in its annual council meeting that the year of 2008 will be greatly focused on the organizational development of grassroots level Red Cross branches. This coincides with national society's three-year grant on intensified capacity building awarded by the International Federation's capacity building fund.

The number of RCSC volunteers in this country reached 1.13 million, and the number of RCSC members reached 28.81 million.

During the first part of 2008, the RCSC headquarters has been conducting a nationwide assessment of RCSC branches on their ongoing organizational development. By June 2008, the assessment has been concluded in eight provincial/prefecture branches, and the RCSC headquarters will continue to assess other branches during the second half of this year. An assessment report will be done by the end of 2008 when the assessments in all provincial/prefecture branches is completed.

The implementation of the intensified capacity building grant will commence in the second half of 2008, with a pilot project in Henan focused on capacity building at the grassroots level for the HIV alliance programme.

Past and ongoing capacity building projects funded by various partners, such as the Netherlands, British, Swiss and Norwegian Red Cross Societies, provides the RCSC opportunities to explore models and best practices that can be applied further.

## Constraints or Challenges

Organizational development issues are a constant cross-cutting part of RCSC's development and growth. It is recognized by the leadership and programme managers as an important element towards becoming a well-functioning national society, but it is difficult to incorporate new concepts and ways of working, especially when facing capacity challenges due to severe disasters. This year has brought about many challenges in this regard.

Furthermore, this programme has not received adequate multi-lateral funding through the International Federation channels, which is critical in pushing forward some of these initiatives.

## Humanitarian values

### Outcome/Expected result

<b>Programme component</b>	<b>Component outcome</b>
HIV/AIDS	Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values of the Red Cross Red Crescent promoted

## Achievements

The RCSC programmes supported by the International Federation all incorporate the Red Cross principles and values at the core of their work. The International Federation is working closely with the RCSC on enhancing this, especially in the HIV alliance programme. Promoting respect and dignity, and reducing stigma and discrimination is a priority area in 2008 activities. One way this is done is by including people living with HIV in training and workshop activities, to provide Red Cross staff, trainers and volunteers the experience of working closely with those living with HIV, and to change their own preconceptions about HIV/AIDS.

Disaster management projects also incorporate the principles and values, especially by working with some of the most vulnerable groups in China to reduce their risks of and exposure to disasters. Due to the increase in urban migration, especially of able-bodied men and women, many of those left in disaster prone areas of the country are elderly, children and the disabled. The programme works to identify these potential beneficiaries for support through International Federation funded projects.

Promotion of humanitarian values in the public has also been enhanced through the support of a communications consultant who has worked with the International Federation's East Asia office over the course of the past year. In 2008, his work primarily focused on assisting the RCSC promote the HIV

alliance, through the media and promotional materials. These materials were used in the launch of the HIV Operational Alliance, and have been published on both the RCSC and International Federation websites.

This consultant also travelled earlier in the year to project areas which receive funding through the Netherlands Red Cross, where he was able to document the project's success in working with men-who-have-sex-with-men and people living with HIV.

Once the earthquake hit, he was brought back on to follow RCSC and International Federation teams in the field and document the work of the Red Cross and liaise with international media. Interviews and stories were covered frequently in international and domestic media, with strong coverage on the cooperation between partners in the movement throughout the operations.

In the coming months, the communications consultant will continue to work with the RCSC on building media exposure on the recovery phase of the earthquake, as well as look for opportunities to highlight RCSC's involvement in the Olympics.

### **Constraints or Challenges**

Cultural perceptions and limited understandings about vulnerable groups is a constant challenge in China when promoting humanitarian values. This is true even within the Red Cross itself. That is why specialized trainings for volunteers that include the participation of all stakeholders, such as people living with HIV, is a critical.

Although the consultant filling the communications position is a very experienced media professional and fluent in Mandarin Chinese, due to a lack of funding, this position is currently only kept on a contractual, short-term basis, as project needs arise. This results in missed opportunities to further promote the positive work of the Red Cross Movement in China.

## **Working in partnership**

The earthquake emergency operation has brought many partners together to provide immediate critical aid to those in the affected areas. The RCSC has coordinated partner involvement, with support of the International Federation's East Asia regional office in Beijing. The International Federation assisted the RCSC in coordinating relief activities supported by the International Federation and partner national societies, i.e. the emergency response unit teams, relief and technical delegates, assessments, etc. An office in Chengdu has been established as a central location for all foreign experts and related relief workers to gather in the coordination of activities.

In addition, the International Federation and RCSC have been coordinating earthquake relief and recovery efforts with World Wildlife Fund, UNICEF and other agencies also working in the quake zone. Cooperation will be strengthened in the coming months, and RCSC's network of partners will grow through the support of International Federation's coordination with these other partners.

The HIV Operational Alliance has brought an opportunity to strengthen many existing partnerships and develop new ones under the structure of the Global Alliance on HIV. This method of coordination will provide a more unified strategy and a better coordination of partnerships on all HIV related activities of the RCSC.

Some individual branches of the RCSC have developed very successful partnerships with people living with HIV and other key community groups within their HIV programming.

In communities most affected by the HIV epidemic, support and facilitation of the Red Cross in forming grassroots groups and partnering with them to implement HIV prevention, care and support activities has been well appreciated by the local governments and communities themselves. However, the overall visibility of these partnerships at national level and their sustainability remains to be challenge and the RCSC HIV programme will continue to work in addressing those challenges.

The regional office maintains close links with the Asian disaster preparedness centre based in Bangkok, UNICEF Asia Pacific regional office, and other regional bodies and resource centres involved in avian influenza prevention and control.

## Contributing to longer-term impact

The disaster response capacities of the RCSC that have been built over the course of these disasters will have a long-term impact on the RCSC's future operations. Handover of the emergency response units to the RCSC will give the RCSC new tools for future deployment. Partnerships have also been developed, through coordination support of the International Federation, which has built up the RCSC's extensive network in disaster management.

The long term impact of community-based disaster preparedness has been measured in that communities that experience disasters year to year, have had a success rate of diminishing the impact of the disasters through their mitigation measures. The community-based disaster preparedness communities also report showing more resilience in handling the disasters, such as in the unique snow disaster this winter that hit many provinces that are normally not exposed to such weather.

Due to the short implementation period and lack of consistent measurement of impact, it is difficult to determine longer term impact of RCSC health programme activities in all targeted provinces. In April this year, with the support from the regional health delegate and an external consultant, the RCSC conducted an impact evaluation of the Australian Red Cross funded HIV project in Xinjiang and the findings reveal major differences in knowledge, attitude and practices among vulnerable groups who have benefited from Red Cross interventions and those who did not. For example, the evaluation showed that two-thirds of the injecting drug users in Urumqi city, capital of Xinjiang province, who benefited from the project, reported using a condom in their last sexual encounter, versus over ten per cent of non-beneficiaries. Also, only 12 percent of the beneficiaries reported sharing injecting equipment in their last drug injecting session, compared to over half of the non-beneficiaries.

All provinces targeted for the RCSC's avian influenza project have a large minority population. Xinjiang Uigur autonomous region alone has approximately 12 million people from 47 different ethnic minority groups representing 60 percent of the province's total population. The project is designed in such a way to reflect the large diversity of its potential beneficiaries by adapting avian influenza public education messages into local languages with diverse cultural interpretations of best practices for disease prevention.

## Looking ahead

The Olympics and Paralympics will commence on the date of the posting of this report. The RCSC has worked very hard to prepare for this event in the training of first aid volunteers, all the while handling multiple disasters (earthquake and annual torrential rains/typhoons) that will continue to require the RCSC's full attention. The International Federation will continue to support the RCSC in these special circumstances, assisting in the coordination of partnerships and recovery activities.

As a part of the earthquake operations, the International Federation regional office is recruiting multiple positions to be based in Sichuan. This additional support will facilitate the resumption of regular programme activities, such as community-based disaster preparedness, avian influenza, and organizational development projects.

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

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