

Annual report

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Disaster Planning and Preparedness

Appeal No. MAA00021

21/04/2009

This report covers the period 01/01/2008 to 31/12/2008.



In February 2007, Mozambique Red Cross volunteers distributed urgently needed blankets to victims left homeless by Cyclone Flavio. **International Federation**

In brief

Programme purpose: To reduce the number of deaths and vulnerability to disasters through the development and effective use of national, regional, and international Red Cross and Red Crescent capacities and resources.

Programme(s) summary:

The Disaster Planning and Preparedness department in line with its five year strategic plan contributes towards creating a more integrated and responsive approach to disaster management (DM) by realigning its programme support in primarily three areas: a) *disaster policy*, b) *disaster preparedness* and c) *risk reduction (including food security)*. To this end and in consultation and close cooperation with other departments, zones, National Societies and external partners, the department focused its work on *policy, principles and standards; disaster preparedness for response; disaster risk reduction; food security and knowledge management* in 2008.

Financial situation: The total budget is CHF 3,175,881 (USD 3,024,649 or EUR 2,117,254), of which 92 per cent covered. Expenditure overall was 81 per cent. The reason for the shortfall in expenditure is due to the fact that two full time positions were not filled; hence the related activities could not be fully implemented.

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

No. of people we help: At least 23.5 million people have benefited from disaster management- (primarily disaster response) related activities in 2008.

Our partners: The International Federation's secretariat works in partnership with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee members (IASC) working group on risk-informed humanitarian action. It is a member of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), and participates in the global platform for disaster risk reduction. It also works with the World Bank and the ProVention Consortium.

Context

According to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), in 2008 alone, disasters claimed 235,816 lives, affected 211 million people and cost a total of USD 181 billion. Asia remains the most disaster-prone continent. The death toll in 2008 was three times higher than the annual average of 66,812 recorded for 2000 to 2007. This can be attributed mainly to two events – Cyclone Nargis and the Sichuan earthquake which claimed 138,366 and 87,476 lives respectively.¹ The total number of people affected by disasters in 2008 was below the annual average of 231 million recorded for the period of 2000 to 2007. In 2008, floods affected 42 million people compared to 164 million in 2007. In terms of economic losses, disaster costs in 2008 were double the annual average recorded for 2000 to 2007 (USD 81 billion). The main reason for the phenomenal increase can be attributed to the Sichuan earthquake (USD 85 billion) and Hurricane Ike (USD 30 billion).²

Equally alarming is the projection that should current trends continue, 100,000 lives will be lost each year, while the costs of natural disasters will be in excess of USD 300 billion per year by 2050.³ These vulnerabilities become even more pronounced in poorer nations where it is estimated that 97 per cent of all people killed by natural disasters each year occur in developing countries.⁴

Further, in the last year, the world has witnessed a high volatility in the price of food creating a host of humanitarian, socio-economic, developmental, political, and security-related challenges, and most notably difficulties in meeting food needs. An increasing number of people, particularly the most vulnerable, are facing problems accessing food, and thus, may be reducing either the quality or the quantity of the food they consume, with the associated risk of malnutrition. The causes of food price increases are numerous and complex.

It is estimated that the International Federation brings assistance through its disaster preparedness and response activities to around 30 million people annually, from refugees to people affected by natural disasters. Disasters and complex emergencies can be a direct threat to economic, social, and political stability. By improving preparedness and reducing vulnerability, the department has contributed towards saving lives and safeguarding the gains of past and ongoing Federation and National Society investments and programmes.

The follow up to the General Assembly and the International Conference in 2007, has set the context for disaster planning and preparedness at the global level. In particular, the focus for follow up is around two themes: a) preparedness and response to disasters, and b) the humanitarian consequences of environmental deterioration and climate change. Sixty-six participating members of the International Conference made pledges to minimize the impact of disasters in their countries, while 60 members made pledges to work towards reducing the impact of climate change.

¹ <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2009/pr-2009-01-disaster-figures-2008.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ SEI, IUCN, IISD: Coping with Climate Change: Environmental Strategies for Increasing Human Security, August 2001 (Source: Munich Re and UNEP).

⁴ World Bank, World Development Report, 2000-1:170.

The three objectives outlined in the plan a) policy, principles and standards; b) National Society capacity building; and c) knowledge management, contribute to the themes outlined above. Planned activities under the disaster, planning and preparedness plans improve the support provided to the countries working towards the follow up of the International Conference.

Progress towards outcomes

Policy, Principles and Standards

Objective 1: To strengthen the development and implementation of the International Federation's DM-related policies, principles and standards.

Outcome(s)/Expected Result(s)

- Policies, strategies and guidelines related to disaster management (including preparedness, relief, recovery, food security, protection and risk reduction) are well understood within the International Federation and by the external stakeholders/partners, and being actively implemented by National Societies and zonal offices.
- The various policies, strategies and guidelines in DM, as well as in other relevant areas of work, such as organizational development and health, are complementary and mutually reinforcing.
- The department has made a significant contribution to support awareness raising and the effective implementation of the International Federation's new performance and accountability framework, as it applies to DM-related work. This includes the development and implementation of Federation-wide DM performance indicators.

Achievements

In line with the revision of the International Federation's Strategy 2010 and the development of a new institutional vision for the future, it was decided that the International Federation's entire policy framework needed to be revised. The aim is to ensure that the policy framework of the institution best reflects and serves the needs of the membership, as well as provides appropriate guidance in all of its actions.

The revision process included the analysis of all existing policy and policy-related documents, as well as the rewriting of relevant texts. The development of a new policy framework and the associated training package has been postponed until after the elaboration of Strategy 2020, in order that there can be total consistency between the new Strategy for the decade and the organizations guiding policies. In the interim period, research is being carried out on the best practice for policy-making, and specifically, on how to integrate the core principles and values of the organization clearly and consistently across all policies. While this work is being carried out, the existing body of policy continues to guide the work of the International Federation and its National Societies.

Progress continues on the revision of the "Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief", a core statutory document which guides the action and coordination of all components of the Movement during a response to natural and technological disasters. A global consultation is underway and will continue into early 2009, in order to update the "Principles and Rules" to reflect the International Federation's "New Operating Model" and priorities for action in the coming decades.

The department contributed to the development of a three-year operational strategy for disaster management, which articulates the way forward in linking relief to development, and in mainstreaming risk reduction into all types of projects.

Work has been carried out together with the “Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response” (SCHR) on improving the management of the “Code of Conduct for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) in Disaster Relief”. More specifically, the work includes an updating of the database of signatories, improvement to the website of the Code of Conduct, increasing access to the spontaneous translations of the Code of Conduct, and redesigning and disseminating the text of the Code more widely.

In moving the policy agenda of disaster risk reduction at the global level, the International Federation continued to lead an Inter-Agency Steering Committee working group on risk-informed humanitarian action, and provided a significant contribution to two European Union (EU) initiatives: that of developing an EU-wide communication on disaster risk reduction, and on an evaluation of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into humanitarian action.

The department also worked in close cooperation with the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) department to develop indicators related to its DM activities to measure performance and impact.

Capacity Building

Objective 2: Increase National Societies’ capacities to support communities to reduce vulnerabilities and disaster impacts.

Outcome(s)/Expected Result(s)

- Training and development of staff and volunteers have improved National Societies’ capacity to provide relevant and participatory approaches in DM that have contributed to reducing community vulnerabilities and impact from disasters.
- National Societies have met or exceeded the minimum standards of a well-prepared National Society (WPNS), and have increased their capacities for monitoring and preparing for the consequences and interaction of emerging challenges, such as climate change, and of chronic vulnerabilities, such as food insecurity.
- National Societies’ systems, procedures and structures are appropriate, effective and efficient in delivering services and support to the public.
- Disaster risk and vulnerability assessments implemented by National Societies for risk reduction, preparedness and response actions have incorporated gender issues.

Achievements

The well-prepared National Societies questionnaire (WPNS) is a joint initiative with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which helps National Societies identify their needs and priorities for preparedness and response to disasters. A total of 82 National Societies (Figure 1) participated in the second round of assessment: 23 came from Africa; nine from the Americas; 21 from Asia and the Pacific; 22 from Europe and Central Asia; and seven from the Middle East and North Africa.

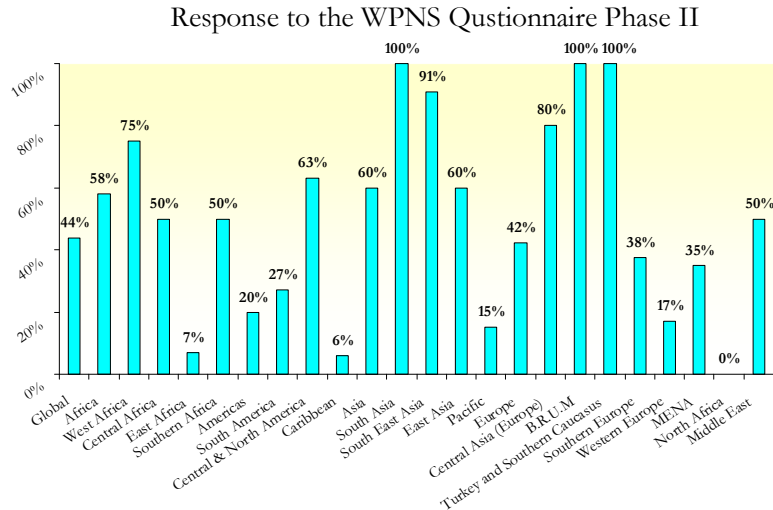


Figure 1

The information derived from the WPNS questionnaire can, and has been used at the global level in large-scale disasters. National Societies have been using the simple checklist form at the national level, as an aid to understanding their own disaster preparedness status and planning needs. As a part of its regional disaster risk reduction programme to improve National Societies' capacities to prepare and respond to natural hazards, the Americas zone is supporting National Societies in the region to implement the WPNS process.⁵ This will in turn provide a baseline for disaster preparedness and for the drafting of the respective National Society's disaster action plans. This initiative was first taken up with the Guatemalan, Honduran, and the Salvadorian Red Cross Societies.

Further, in the Americas, baseline studies against the "characteristics of a well-prepared National Society" show that many National Societies have made significant progress in strengthening their overall preparedness and capacities for response, with improved plans and assessment tools, well-trained staff and volunteers, more adequate systems, and improved coordination with other actors. At the same time, the need to reinforce the response capacity at the branch level has become clear during this period, given that the initial response is key and is provided locally.

National Societies such as in Laos and Timor-Leste have used WPNS to develop their disaster preparedness programmes and to identify human resource needs nationally and, most importantly, in hazard-prone areas of the country.

The WPNS tool has been useful in assessing and understanding an organization's disaster management capacity, prioritizing an intervention, and planning a programme. Country profiles and regional analysis have been produced based on the feedback received. A global analysis presenting the results and analysis for Phase II will be drafted and published in the first quarter of 2009. Based on the WPNS process which was carried out in South Asia in November 2007, the South Asia regional delegation produced a case study, re-emphasizing the importance of WPNS. The case study provided a regional overview of the capacities in the region, identified gaps, and suggested recommendations on the way forward.

WPNS information proved to be a vital source of information for West and Central Africa, and facilitated the preparations for the flood season.

⁵[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2007.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/EGUA-75LNFF-full_report.pdf/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2007.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/EGUA-75LNFF-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf)

The WPNS process was completed in Haiti prior to the hurricane season. It was attended by representatives from the Haitian National Red Cross Society headquarters, and thirteen regional branches, as well as representatives from Participating National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation as observers and actors involved in advancing the process. This enabled the National Society to reflect on existing capacities, and to identify gap areas in disaster management.

In summary, WPNS phase II has been used for: developing indicators for the UK Department for International Development (DFID) IS III; the chapter on auxiliary role to the International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) advocacy manual; the disaster risk reduction situational analysis; the principles and values – policy global agenda goal 4; the American Red Cross Society’s International Services: to develop proposals for various National Societies; and the emergency appeals – Haiti, Myanmar, Cuba, Costa Rica amongst others. Further, there is an ongoing discussion to use WPNS to develop disaster risk reduction and food security baselines. National Societies have used WPNS for long-term planning.

According to global statistics, 75 per cent of National Societies run community-based programmes⁶, and 52 per cent run community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) and risk reduction programmes (Figure 2). These initiatives can include educating, preparing and supporting local populations and communities in their everyday efforts to reduce risks and prepare their own local response mechanisms to address disaster emergency situations (i.e., community response teams, annual simulations and drills, contingency planning, local stock piling and improving community first aid capacity).

Community-based disaster preparedness initiatives

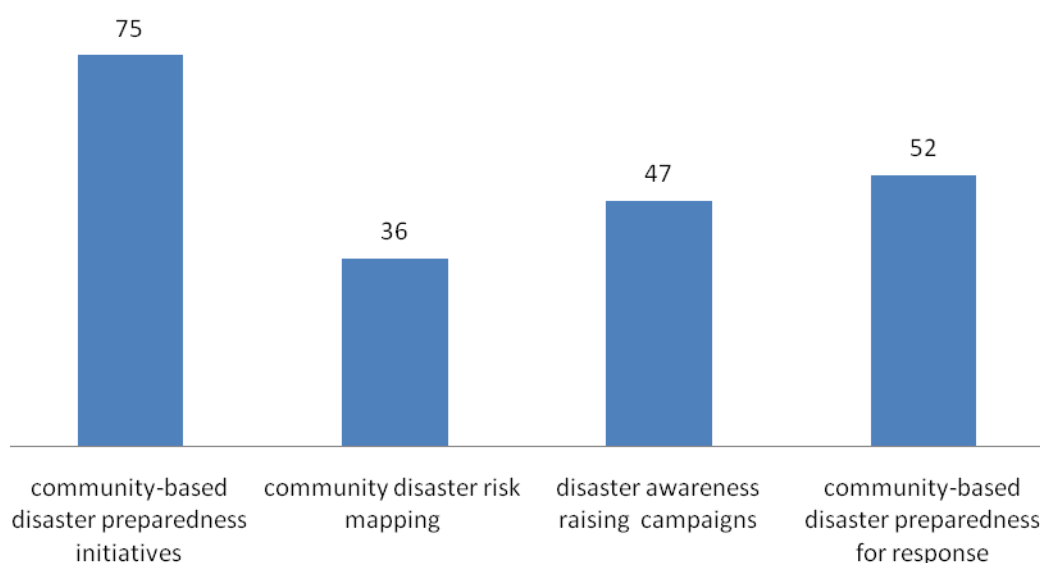


Figure 2 Number of National Societies engaged in community-based disaster preparedness initiatives⁷

In support of the capacity development of National Societies, technical support was provided to two regional vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) training workshops (one with a unique urban focus). Two VCA training DVDs: *The ABC of VCA* and *the Art and the Science of VCA*, were produced, and National Society staff were supported to attend the ProVention forum in

⁶ Based on Phase II of well-prepared National Society analysis of 82 countries

⁷ Ibid

Panama. Additionally two DVD productions on disaster risk reduction were finalized in collaboration with the British Red Cross Society, ProVention and five UK-based NGOs.

In Lesotho, the training provided the National Society with an opportunity to work with other partners and with the community through a pragmatic approach. VCA learning-by-doing empowered community members, who were an integral part of the team collecting data, supporting the data analysis, and validating information. They were able to draw their own hazard, risk and capacity maps, as well as to rank their problems according to priority, and find possible solutions to build safer and resilient households and communities.

In Cambodia, due to the training and participation in VCAs, the commune committees have become fully supportive of the CBDP programme. The integrated approach to assessment and village preparedness and risk reduction planning, which also considers health risks and risks to livestock, ensured that vulnerabilities were addressed more broadly (including from a health and livelihood perspective), and that multiple hazards were taken into account.

The CBDP programmes of the Red Cross Society of China exemplify an integrated approach to addressing community risk and working towards initiatives that will render communities safer and more resilient.⁸ The programme developed by Guangxi and Hunan provincial branches aims to assist the most flood-prone and flood-affected villages. The integrated approach was implemented through sanitation, health and hygiene education, community water supply and disaster preparedness. In the disaster preparedness component of the disaster programme curricula, simulation exercises were held in local schools to provide teachers and students with information on what do in the event of a disaster. Similarly, the Salvadorian Red Cross Society trained teachers in disaster preparedness and mitigation in 101 schools in high-risk communities. Students and teachers developed mitigation and preparedness plans with the help of local Red Cross volunteers. This type of community disaster education for schools is now implemented globally by 38 per cent of National Societies.⁹

Vulnerability and capacity assessment

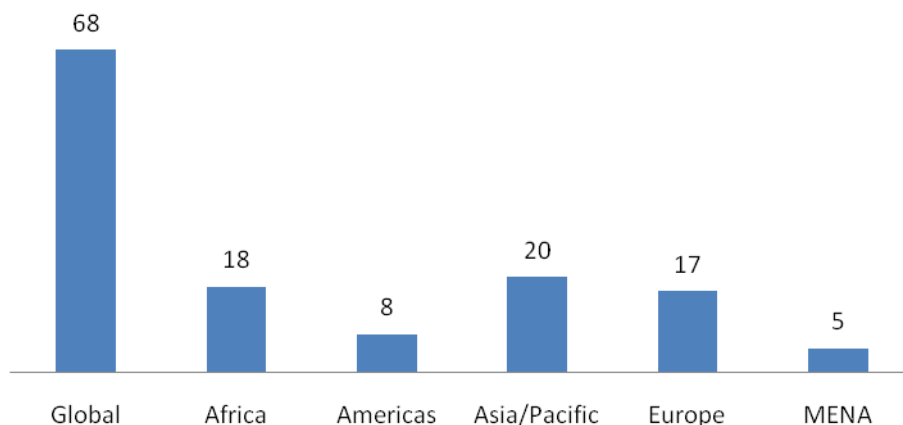


Figure 3 Number of National Societies with VCAs globally and by region¹⁰

In Yemen, VCAs have been conducted in Taiz and Hoidedah, as part of the preparation to establish sub-branches. An initial assessment has resulted in a three-year proposal (2008 to 2010) to implement disaster risk reduction programmes at the local level in 40 districts located in 10 disaster-prone governorates.

⁸ International Federation (2008), China and Cambodia: Integrating programming and cooperation with local authorities boost communities’ disaster preparedness

⁹ Based on Phase II of well-prepared National Society analysis of 82 countries

¹⁰ *ibid*

On 24 October 2008, heavy rains resulted in flash floods throughout Hadramaut (consisting of about 30 districts), and the Maharah governorates of Yemen. The Yemen Red Crescent Society opened a 24 hour operation room at its headquarters, and deployed a rapid assessment team to assist the branches and support the victims. Ten volunteers from the Sana'a branch were deployed, and the National Society sent an alert to all the branches requesting them to put the trained national intervention team (NIT) members on stand by for eventual deployment to the disaster sites. Volunteers who benefited from the VCA training supported through various channels (Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) and DFID) assisted in the operation.

The assessment methodology for pre-VCA and post-disasters (emergency assessments) has been harmonized and standardized with the publication of Emergency Assessment (EA) Guidelines in March 2008 and the Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA) – Training Guide, in April 2008. Efforts are now ongoing to update the assessment modules in the various DM trainings conducted by the International Federation.

After extensive discussions, a first draft of the secretariat's Early Warning, Early Action system is coming together. This system will bring together early warning (EW) knowledge, and feed it into the structures of the secretariat for early action (EA). At the community level, guidelines are being researched for creating community-based monitoring systems that National Societies could develop to complement the secretariat EWEA system. In the meantime 452 of the planned 6,509 tsunami-affected communities have completed their community-based early warning systems under a wider disaster risk reduction programme.

Six National Societies from South Asia and Europe (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Armenia, Syria, Jordan, Yemen, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Panama) tested the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanism (NDPRM) guidelines in the first half of the 2008. Initial results from the test phase of the NDPRM guidelines suggests that both approach and content of the document is relevant for the development of appropriate National Society disaster management systems. There are also some initial indications that these guidelines will need to be supplemented with standard disaster management training modules as articulated within the guidelines.

In May 2008, in the span of five days, Belize was struck by two tropical storms, Alma and Arthur. Two-thirds of the country was flooded, affecting 10,000 people and causing seven fatalities. From the National Society headquarters to the branch level the response was immediate, rapid, orderly and controlled.¹¹ The Belize Red Cross Society immediately responded to the disaster, and all eight local branches in the six districts of the country were prepared and able to respond in a timely and appropriate manner. Within 24 hours, over 30 national intervention teams (NIT) were deployed to the most-affected areas: the districts of Corozal, Orange Walk and Stann Creek. As part of the relief operation, each assessment team had an NIT trained in community-based first aid. Basic first aid was carried out in all three affected districts. NITs from Stann Creek branch were activated to carry out assessments of the situation in that area, including the living conditions and needs in shelters. In June, an NIT specialized in water and sanitation was deployed to Stann Creek. This was the worst-affected area, completely cut off due to flooded roads and damaged bridges. To prevent the risk of waterborne and water-related diseases that can arise within three days of a disaster, the team brought and set up an emergency portable water purifier, and was producing over 4,000 litres of drinking water per hour. Overall, more than 137,500 litres of water were distributed to affected communities.

¹¹[www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDdocUnidFilename/EDIS-7MKR8Z-full_report.pdf/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDdocUnidFilename/EDIS-7MKR8Z-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf)

In West and Central Africa, National Societies using NDPRM guidelines, are improving their response strategy through the National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) training.¹² Similarly, the Middle East and North Africa region is providing increased support for implementation of its NDRT training.¹³ The main aim of the technical support will be to build capacity through NDRTs in disaster management as articulated in the guidelines.

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's experience with branch disaster response teams (BDRT) illustrates how central their role can be in disaster response efforts in particular within vulnerable "at risk" communities. The 2006 training and investment in human resources was amply highlighted in early 2008 when the Ampara district was hit by severe flooding which affected more than 100,000 people.¹⁴ In response BDRTs were deployed to conduct rapid and detailed needs assessments. They were also involved in local relief efforts, and conducted post floods rehabilitation activities in some districts.

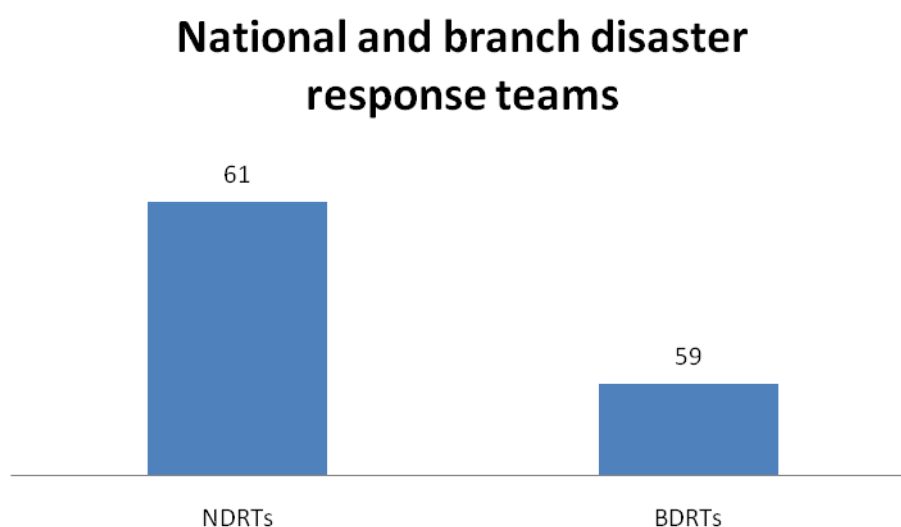


Figure 4 Number of National Societies with NDRTs and BDRTs¹⁵

During 2007 and 2008, 32 National Societies¹⁶ developed and/or updated their contingency plans. In the Middle East and North Africa region, a workshop was held in April 2008 on new contingency planning guidelines, and to develop a regional plan of action for either developing or revising the existing contingency plans in the region. This has benefited, for example, the Egyptian Red Crescent Society in its response to the Gaza crisis that started in late 2008. In response to the crisis, the National Society planned for various possible scenarios including: continued coordination, mobilization and dispatch of relief and medical supplies into Gaza, as well as preparing for a potential influx of displaced populations into Egypt's border areas. The plan also revised the focus of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society's efforts in particular in incorporating cooperation and coordination mechanisms at all levels (international, regional and national), and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of parties involved in response to the crises.

¹² [www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/FBUO-7L3GJ9-full_report.pdf/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/FBUO-7L3GJ9-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf)

¹³ www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/annual06/MAA00003DMCProgrammeUpdatell.pdf

¹⁴ www.ifrc.org/Docs/News/08/08011401/index.asp

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ (Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Timor-Leste, Georgia, India, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Laos, Macedonia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Panama, Paraguay, Serbia (including Kosovo), Swaziland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Zambia and Zimbabwe)

With regard to food security, the International Federation and the ICRC have been monitoring the impact of increasing food prices volatility on vulnerable communities, and each has set up a task force to enable appropriate Red Cross Red Crescent action. The task force, made up of different technical sectors provided the necessary leadership in areas such as strategic planning, monitoring, analysis, technical support, communication and advocacy, and evaluation. A coherent and integrated approach enabled consistent messages and actions for zones, National Societies, and the ICRC. Further, the International Federation and the ICRC issued a joint statement on the coordination of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's response to the humanitarian consequences of food price increase.

The International Federation's secretariat developed a point of view on worldwide food price increases which was sent to all National Societies and International Federation field offices on 30 April 2008. It also issued practical guidance to all National Societies and delegations detailing specific action to be taken in addressing food price increases. In April 2008, a five-year strategy framework on food security for Africa was launched (for further details, please refer to the food security in Africa report).

A high-level conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bio energy was organized by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and held in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008. The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement was represented by the Italian Red Cross Society, the Red Crescent Society of United Arab Emirates, the International Federation and the ICRC. The objective was to assist countries and the international community in devising sustainable solutions to the food crisis by identifying the policies, strategies and programmes required to safeguard world food security in the immediate, short and long term.

Since May 2008, the Americas zone has been implementing a pilot integrated food security project (food security, volunteering, health and organizational development) consisting of the development of four components in order to reach an integral and sustainable action at the institutional and community level. The project has been implemented in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras in one filial of a community in each of the countries. One of the main components of the project has been to strengthen and promote branch volunteer's network and volunteering policy. National Society decision-makers at both the headquarter and branch level were trained on volunteering management in accordance with the International Federation's directives. The training enabled the branches and volunteer networks to endorse the project, provided better support to the community, and promoted their role within their National Society and the community as key actors.

As a member of the task force of the steering committee on food security the International Federation contributed to the food security assessments programme implementation and monitoring. Further, the International Federation also contributed to the task force by sharing experiences with key players such as FAO, OXFAM and CARE International.

The Disaster Planning and Preparedness department provided technical input and support to its field offices through the disaster management coordinators and food security officers, with a view to link the food security and nutrition policy to practice. Similarly, technical support was also provided to various emergency operations and appeals during the year. In the Horn of Africa, where an exceptional food security appeal for CHF 113 million was launched, the department seconded its disaster preparedness advisor for a period of seven weeks to develop an emergency assessment of the crises. The Horn of Africa compliments the Africa food security initiative by building a strong recovery focus for the communities affected by the current crises and thus contribute to building community resilience and increasing capacity for timely response should similar crises arise in the future. In using a standardized and focused approach, all food security programmes will fall under the umbrella of the relevant National Society with support from both the Movement and external partners.

DFID and the British Red Cross Society supported a three-year disaster risk reduction programme (DR Phase II) which formally ended on 30 April 2008. DFID and the British Red Cross Society will continue to support disaster risk reduction through the wider five-year DFID/British Red Cross Society/International Federation's Institutional Strategy (2007 to 2011). A final evaluation of the DR Phase II was completed, and a summary report is now under publication for knowledge-sharing purposes.

Constraints or challenges

Forty-four per cent of National Societies participated in the second phase of WPNS which came to an end in October 2008. There has been a very low response rate from Western Europe, the Pacific and East Africa.

Progress on developing a comprehensive package for public awareness was limited. Two constraints limited this progress. The original work plan for the year anticipated two senior officers for disaster preparedness, however this did not materialize. Similarly, reassignment of the only disaster preparedness officer to a seven week field assignment meant work plans towards the end of year were disrupted.

Knowledge Management

Objective 3: To support and promote good practice and policy in disaster management and risk reduction.

Outcome(s)/Expected Result(s):

- Current knowledge on good practice developed and readily accessible to National Societies and external organizations.
- Information on global risk patterns and trends made available and used by the zonal offices, National Societies and other stakeholders.
- Key Federation principles and priorities influencing internal/external practice through advocacy activities.
- Optimum use of resources through alliances and effective cooperation.

Achievements

The 2008 edition of the *World Disasters Report* (WDR) was the first in the series to focus on HIV and AIDS – both as a disaster within its own right, and in the context of natural disasters. Man-made and “natural” disasters exacerbate other drivers of the epidemic, and can also increase people’s vulnerability to infection. The launch in June 2008 included a panel discussion by technical experts and HIV and AIDS advocates. The event was attended by over 100 Permanent Missions and representatives of international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Over 90 National Societies, country representatives and zones organized launch events across the world in the form of round table discussions, seminars, press conferences, etc. In addition to Arabic, French and Spanish, the summaries were translated into local languages by the following countries: Afghanistan, Armenia, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Japan, Moldova, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Taiwan, Tonga, and Ukraine.

The report received widespread coverage and was used by the International AIDS Society as an advocacy tool in the field. OXFAM highlighted the report at the International AIDS conference in Mexico in August 2008.

The World Disasters Report team commenced work on developing the content for the 2009 edition which is to focus on early warning early action. An editorial board consisting of experts on the subject was established by July, main contributors to the report contracted by September,

and box contributors by October 2008. The report is in the design/production phase and will be launched during the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction on 17 June 2009.

To promote knowledge sharing, the International Federation has produced a number of publications VCA – *What is VCA; How to do a VCA; VCA toolbox and VCA training guide*. All are available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. Further, the *Guidelines for emergency assessment*, first published in October 2005 have been reviewed in collaboration with the ICRC. The second edition, *Guidelines for assessment in emergencies* was published in March 2008, and now includes the household economy approach, as well as checklists on what to look for in the first 24 hours and within 72 hours of an emergency. This document is available in English and Arabic. The French, Spanish and Russian versions will be available as of early 2009.

A Framework for *community safety and resilience* has been developed. The aim of the framework being to support National Societies in the promotion and implementation of a holistic and an integrated approach developed with, and for, communities in response to the multiple hazards they face (including those worsened by climate change). It also incorporates health, environmental risks and socio-economic issues. The framework consolidates work undertaken to date to reduce underlying vulnerabilities to disasters as part of the Red Cross Red Crescent's commitments under the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA).

Further, during the course of the year, case studies were developed to document initiatives under disaster management, such as food security (*From emergency to development – Reducing vulnerability to food insecurity: The experience of the Mali Red Cross; Mothers' club in Togo*), disaster preparedness (*Disaster preparedness and response: building from the ground up; Harmonizing learning in Central America; China and Cambodia: Integrated programming and cooperation with local authorities boost communities' disaster preparedness*), disaster risk reduction (*Tuvalu – Joining forces to tackle climate change; Recovery and risk reduction through livelihood support in Timor-Leste; Bridging the gap – Integrating climate change and disaster risk reduction; The Red Cross Red Crescent and the Hyogo Framework for Action - Focus on the Asia-Pacific region*).

Further, two videos on VCA have also been developed:

- The *ABC of VCA* – a five minute video explaining the basics of VCA.
- *VCA – The Art and the Science* – a 20 minute video on the different steps of VCA, based on three VCA learning-by-doing workshops in Lesotho, Bangladesh and Panama. Both videos are available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

The disaster management resource framework, available on the International Federation's intranet, FedNet, has been updated and is now also available in French. Special sections have been developed for the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction in the partnership and the disaster management sections. In addition, a section on the high food price crisis has been included.

The disaster management section of the International Federation's web site www.ifrc.org was revamped and went live in February 2008. In line with the two major long-term commitments disaster risk reduction and food security – the website has a special section devoted to this area of work.

Working in partnership

Collaboration continued with the ISDR System and other bodies. This included attending the ISDR System Management Oversight Board (MOB), contributing to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/ISDR workshop on risk assessment, as well as being part of a multi-agency event, led by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and

the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on considering the linkage between climate change and HIV and AIDS. The partnership with five UK NGOs to deliver specific disaster risk reduction tools has been ongoing. There has been significant collaboration with ProVention, and considerable time has been invested in shaping how disaster risk reduction is addressed through humanitarian action working with the IASC and the EU.

Discussions with the World Meteorological Organization are ongoing to help establish national level partnerships with Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, and national meteorological offices to create a functioning early warning system for humanitarian organizations. Initial partnerships are being explored in Americas, Asia Pacific and Africa.

Contributing to longer-term impact

National Societies as leading disaster response and preparedness actors in their countries and as auxiliaries to their governments need to have direction and guidance in their activities that reflect the neutral and impartial nature of their work. Clear policy guidance is a precondition to effectively implement activities on the ground, and helps guide planning and preparedness for today and tomorrow's future disasters. Policy also needs to help National Societies coherently understand and link effectively the different activities for which they are involved in. For example; in the areas of first aid, risk reduction and gender-based violence.

Identifying good practices and sharing experiences on disaster risk reduction was carried out through four distinct forums. A workshop in Kathmandu brought together National Society staff from Africa and Asia to reflect on how to address disaster risk reduction at the local level. Sessions were held in both Panama and Rabat to exchange experiences, and to consider a draft disaster risk reduction framework. A two-day cross-regional workshop on DR Phase II was held in Johannesburg.

In order to minimize the impact of disasters, National Societies in countries prone to natural hazards need to have an effective disaster preparedness programme in place. Implementation of effective capacity-building strategies and disaster preparedness programmes must be based on an accurate review of the existing capacities/programmes. WPNS has already proved to be a useful tool in disaster preparedness mapping. It is recognized by the National Societies that WPNS can serve as a vital source of information, and help indicate the most urgent issues to be taken into account while responding to an emergency.

Looking ahead

In line with the core membership services, the Disaster Planning and Preparedness department will continue to provide National Societies and zones with support in regard to development of tools and guidance, coordination, knowledge sharing, resource mobilization, representation and needs-based technical support.

The process of revising the policy will involve all 186 National Societies, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross. It is also critical that policy guidance takes into account coordination with other agencies working alongside the International Federation and its members. Therefore, consultation will involve dialogue and meetings with other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

The first drafts for the new guidelines on community-based early warning systems and public awareness/education will be developed in 2009.

The well-prepared National Society questionnaire which is being revised for phase III (2009–2011) will be administered in the first quarter of 2009.

In terms of knowledge sharing, case studies will be commissioned to capture good practices and the impact of various programmes and projects in different sectors.

How we work	
<p>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".</p>	<p>Global Agenda Goals:</p> <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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