



Photo credit: Palang Merah Indonesia

PROTECT HUMANITY STOP INDIFFERENCE



Migration

Meeting the needs and protecting the rights of people on the move

ISSUE

In 2013, the number of migrants rose to **59.4 million** in Asia Pacific, accounting for roughly one quarter of the world's total population of migrants¹.

In 2013, there were **232 million** international migrants worldwide².

The number of female migrants in the world is steadily increasing. In 2013, women comprised **48%** of all international migrants worldwide³.

Over **50%** of all international migrants in Asia are female: most of whom are employed as domestic workers.⁴

HOW WE HELP

Assistance: providing humanitarian assistance to migrants, irrespective of their legal status, to address their most pressing needs and to respond to the most vulnerable groups.

Protection: developing protection activities that aim to protect lives, human well-being and secure respect for individuals.

Public Awareness and Promotion of Respect for Diversity, Non-violence and Social Cohesion:

conducting a wide range of activities to foster the integration of migrants into local communities.

Advocacy: the promotion and protection of migrants' rights in line with the Fundamental Principles and to meet humanitarian needs.

Red Cross and Red Crescent migration support is:



People-centred: based on the recognition of each migrant's individuality and aspirations and taking into account the needs of host communities, in order to promote a culture of peace and non-violence and to support safe and resilient communities.



Risk-targeted: focused on the specific vulnerabilities migrants face in Southeast Asia.



Integrated: recognizing the intersections with gender and diversity, disaster response, community preparedness, violence prevention, health and youth.

The unique role of Red Cross Red Crescent results in:



Access: National Societies have extensive knowledge of local communities with countrywide networks of volunteers present at a grass-root level.



Influence: as auxiliaries to government, National Societies have a privileged place at decision-making tables and can contribute to national migration strategies and plans.



Partnerships: Red Cross Red Crescent coordinates with global and regional migration partners while also acting in a convener role with civil society organisations.



Sustainability: National Societies are present in local communities before, during and after crises, mobilizing local people to respond to their own needs, through local branches and units.



The Manila Conference on Labor Migration. Photo credit: Cheryl Gagala/IFRC

ISSUE

“All our discussions about migration would benefit greatly if we put human beings at the centre”

Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General,
International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies

Migration is a global phenomenon that is here to stay. Protracted crises, environmental degradation, human rights abuses, and poverty will continue to force millions of people to take the agonizing decision to leave their homes in search of safety, opportunity and dignity. In 2013, the number of migrants rose to 59.4 million in Asia and the Pacific, accounting for roughly one quarter of the world’s total population of migrants.⁵ An estimated 43% of Asian migrants move within the region⁶ and every day an estimated 120,000 people are migrating to cities in the Asia Pacific region.⁷

Within this context, National Societies are increasingly required to respond to the humanitarian needs of migrants. In Asia Pacific, the needs of female migrants and migrant workers are of particular concern. 83% of national and migrant domestic workers worldwide are females⁸ and Asia Pacific is the largest employer of domestic workers, representing 41% of the global total.⁹

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Southeast Asia regional delegation, based in Bangkok, works as part of a global team to support and facilitate the dynamic work of 11 local Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Timor-Leste, Thailand and Viet Nam. IFRC country offices are located in Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Timor Leste and Viet Nam. The zone office covering all of Asia Pacific is located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Migration and more broadly human mobility remains one of the biggest global challenges facing States and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement today. Without sufficient legal and humanitarian protection, migrants are often “living at the margin of conventional health, social and legal systems”, more likely to face increased vulnerability and subject to abuse and exploitation.

The rapidly growing magnitude and complexity of the migration phenomena requires urgent and coordinated action from the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, governments and humanitarian actors.

⁵ <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/03-International-migration-SYB2014.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.iom.int/asia-and-pacific>

⁷ http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr2015_en.pdf

⁸ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_384860.pdf

⁹ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_173363.pdf



Thai Red Cross helps migrant workers during the Thai Floods of 2011. Photo credit: Félix Genêt Laframboise/IFRC

HOW WE HELP

“The scale of migration needs in the region requires a coordinated approach, which unites the collective power of IFRC, ICRC and National Societies”

Anne E LECLERC, Head, IFRC
Southeast Asia Regional Delegation

In line with the migration resolution adopted at the 31st International Conference, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has officially committed to playing a greater role in the area of migration¹⁰.

Over the past years, the Southeast Asia Regional Delegation, along with National Societies in Asia Pacific and Middle East and North Africa regions, has pushed forward the agenda to address the humanitarian concerns surrounding migration, focusing on rights and dignity, respect for diversity and social inclusion but also linking migration with climate change (including increased urbanization) and the challenge of building resilient communities.

This work is made possible due to the coordinated approach of IFRC, ICRC, and National Societies operating in the region. Global and regional migration networks such as the Migration Task Force, the Asia Pacific Migration Network and the Platform for European Red Cross Cooperation on Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants, also enhance cooperation and contribute to collective learning.

At the regional level

As the world continues to undergo a process of rapid globalization, factors such as conflict, poverty and growing inequalities have led to an increase in labor migration, notably from countries in Asia Pacific to destination countries in the Middle East, as well as labor migration taking place within Southeast Asia. A large proportion of labor migrants, particularly those who travel to work in the domestic sphere, are women. Female domestic workers often live behind closed doors, and can face abuse, coercion, sexual assault and slavery, undignified work conditions, and other inhumane treatment. By virtue of being behind closed doors, sometimes with few rights to travel outside of the home, these women are hard to reach, and harder still to protect.

In June 2014, representatives from 21 National Societies – both sending and receiving countries, all directly affected by the impact of labor migration – met for the first time under the umbrella of the Red Cross Red Crescent **Doha Dialogue** on Migration to discuss their current work with migrants workers and to share concerns and success stories. They were joined by members of governments and external agencies, an opportunity for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to be both more visible in the labor migration sector and also to explore potential for partnerships and advocacy at the national and international levels.

As one of the recommendations of the first meeting of the Doha Dialogue in June 2014, **the first-ever Regional Inter-cultural and Inter-Religious Dialogue** took place in January 2015.

¹⁰ <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/migration/international-conference/>



Preparedness is key to protection and resilience. Here Thai Red Cross practice 'sea search and rescue'.
Photo credit: Siriporn Othavorn/Finnish Red Cross



In engaging children and young people fleeing their homes, the Red Cross Red Crescent promotes a culture of empowering children and youth to take meaningful action and giving back to the communities.
Photo credit: Yoshi Shimizu/IFRC

“Today, the woeful plight of migrants, particularly the millions of women working as household service workers who are most vulnerable to abuse, maltreatment and other violations, compel the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to focus on the issue”

Richard J. Gordon,
Chairman, Philippine Red Cross.

This dialogue, co-hosted by Myanmar Red Cross Society, the Centre of International Studies and Strategies and the Interfaith Dialogue group, laid the foundation to bring together National Societies from South and Southeast Asia, academics, interfaith organizations, government representatives and non-governmental organizations and to discuss issues of gender and diversity within migration.

Following this, in May 2015, the Manila Conference on Labor Migration was held. The focus of the Manila Conference was on female household service workers. This ensured that attention was placed on the specific challenges and issues, as well as current initiatives and solutions for female domestic workers. A key outcome was the commitment of participants to work towards a common goal to increase the protection, rights and better provision of services for female household service workers outlined in the [Manila Declaration on Women Household Service Workers](#).

The IFRC and National Societies in Southeast Asia are also coordinating with civil society organisations for the [Global Rights of Migrants in Action](#) project. Co-funded by the European Union, the 45 month project seeks to promote and protect the human rights of migrants in targeted countries, migration corridors and regions through globally coordinated civil society action, with a specific focus on migrant domestic workers and victims of human trafficking.

At the national and community levels

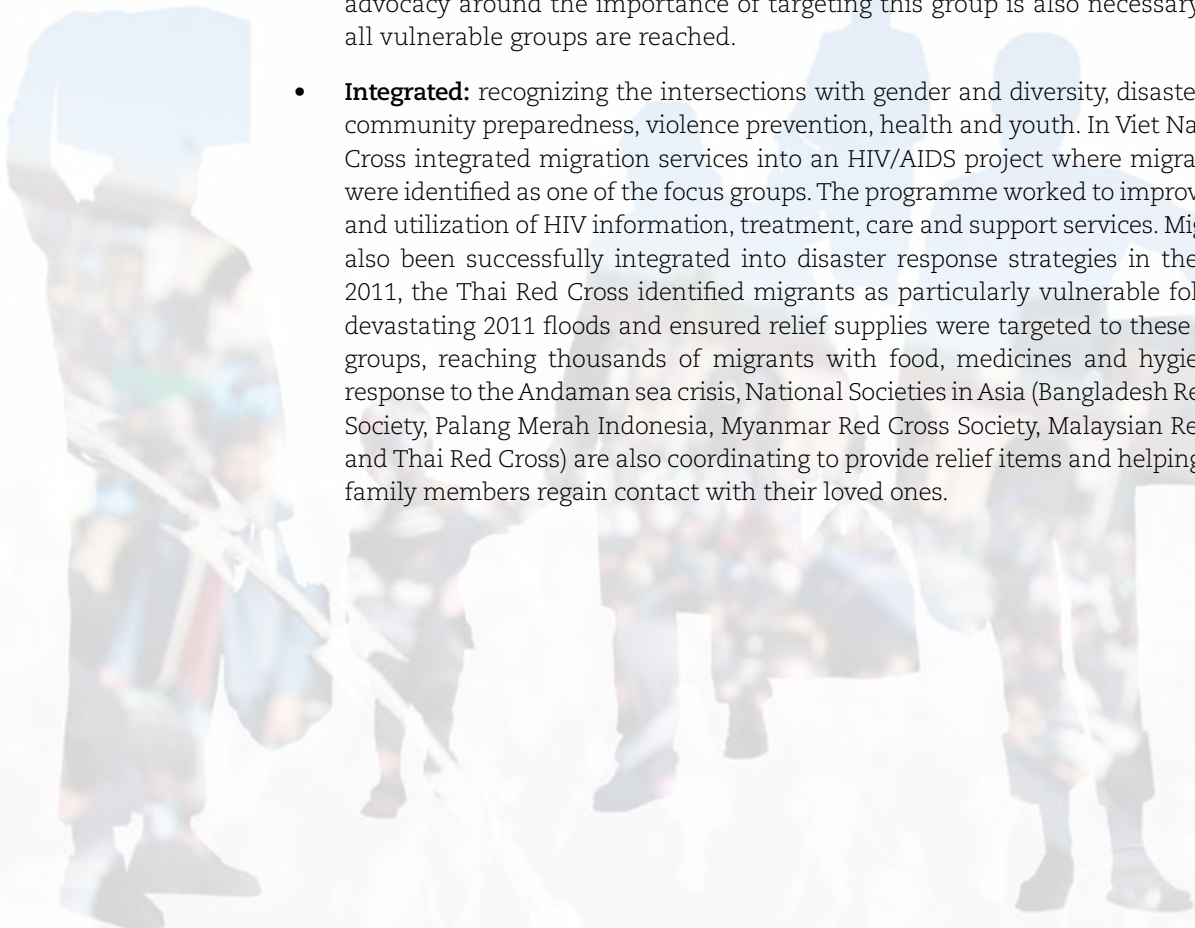
National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as independent auxiliaries to their governments, enjoy a unique relationship entailing mutual responsibilities. Thus, National Societies are well positioned to open up dialogue on migration issues with people at all level of government and are advocating for improvements in labour laws, policies and programmes for labour migrants and expatriate workers. Together in partnership with authorities, international and local organizations, foundations and other stakeholders, the IFRC and National Societies are working to ensure that migrants are able to access basic health and welfare services while addressing cultural and language challenges, discrimination, gender and violence related issues.

Through our work in sending and receiving countries, and our extensive network of volunteers in local communities, Red Cross Red Crescent services are able to reach vulnerable migrants with desperately needed humanitarian support. In doing so, we have accumulated a vast amount of knowledge on the needs of migrants and host communities, and also on the challenges of providing support to this growing humanitarian and political crisis.

NATIONAL/
COMMUNITY
LEVEL

Red Cross Red Crescent migration programmes in Southeast Asia are:

- **People-centred** - programmes that meet people 'where they are' and support the aspirations of migrants. Migrants face a unique set of challenges that can impact them at each stage of their journey. However they are not a homogenous group. They are individuals and communities that are at a greater risk due to their gender or physical and social differences that cause them to be increasingly vulnerable. In the Philippines the Red Cross has signed a **memorandum of understanding** with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to work together to protect the rights of all migrant workers, with a focus on women household service workers. Specifically, the MOU will focus on joint collaborative activities to enhance the delivery of necessary and essential services to Filipino migrant workers and their families. This will include the establishment of an international call center, named lifeline, which migrant workers can use to contact their families, agencies, and governments in case of emergencies.
- **Risk-targeted:** focused on specific issues, including among others, the health needs of particularly vulnerable migrant groups. The Thai Red Cross and the IFRC is part of the national *Task Force on Migrant Health Security in Thailand (TFMH)*. Established by the Ministry of Public Health and convened by World Health Organization, the group brings together international organizations and other stakeholders to help strengthen the overall health security for migrant and Thai populations. In particular the group are looking at ways to maximize migrant participation in the Ministry of Public Health migrant health insurance scheme. The Thai Government is currently rolling out a universal health insurance approach to extend coverage of health care to migrant populations from their neighboring countries – Myanmar, Lao and Cambodia. The IFRC and Thai Red Cross, as members of the Ministry of Public Health national Health and Migration platform, are committed to support and contribute to this national strategy, ensuring access to basic health services is extended to migrants. Undocumented migrants are currently not covered within this approach so increased advocacy around the importance of targeting this group is also necessary to ensure all vulnerable groups are reached.
- **Integrated:** recognizing the intersections with gender and diversity, disaster response, community preparedness, violence prevention, health and youth. In Viet Nam, the Red Cross integrated migration services into an HIV/AIDS project where migrant workers were identified as one of the focus groups. The programme worked to improve access to and utilization of HIV information, treatment, care and support services. Migration has also been successfully integrated into disaster response strategies in the region. In 2011, the Thai Red Cross identified migrants as particularly vulnerable following the devastating 2011 floods and ensured relief supplies were targeted to these vulnerable groups, reaching thousands of migrants with food, medicines and hygiene kits. In response to the Andaman sea crisis, National Societies in Asia (Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Palang Merah Indonesia, Myanmar Red Cross Society, Malaysian Red Crescent and Thai Red Cross) are also coordinating to provide relief items and helping separated family members regain contact with their loved ones.



Red Cross Red Crescent in numbers

37 Member

National Societies in Asia Pacific

9.85 million

Red Cross and Red Crescent Volunteers are from the Asia Pacific region. This represents over 50% of the IFRC's 17 million volunteers globally

More than

19 million

beneficiaries supported in 2014¹¹ in Asia Pacific¹²



First aid activities by Brunei Red Crescent. Photo credit: Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent

CASE STUDY

Female migrant workers targeted for basic first aid training in Brunei

The Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent is reaching out to housemaids and nannies, many of whom are female migrant workers, with a targeted basic first aid course focused on how to respond to emergencies and minor accidents in the home.

The one-day course, entitled *Basic First Aid for Housemaids*, has already trained at least 100 housemaids and nannies in Brunei Darussalam, the majority of whom are expatriate workers. 83% of domestic workers worldwide are female and Asia Pacific is the largest employer of domestic workers¹³.

"First aid training for housemaids and nannies is an excellent example of how National Societies can work together with female labor migrants in Southeast Asia. Through the provision of vital, life-saving skills, the Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent is supporting housemaids and nannies to play an important role in keeping families and communities safe" said Sheikh Kadir Abdullah, Secretary General of Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society.

Designed by the Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent, the course is carried out by qualified Red Crescent trainers and teaches participants how to respond to medical emergencies relating to heart attacks, asthma, hypertension and diabetes. Trainers also teach the housemaids and nannies the basic first aid skills needed to respond to minor accidents such as burns, electric shocks, children choking and cuts and bruises.

¹¹ 17,894,000 beneficiaries reached through multilateral and bilateral projects implemented by NS with IFRC APZO support and 1,749,229 beneficiaries reached through disaster response operations (Emergency Appeals and DREF) implemented by NS with IFRC APZO support

¹² Asia Pacific Zone Annual Report 2014

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Humanity The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.