**Highlights from the OD and Youth session during the 2014 SEA Regional CSR Forum**

*Introduction*

The agenda of community safety and resilience is being promoted quite significantly in south east Asia. In the past, DM; Health and OD as well as Youth Groups ( from the NSs in the region and facilitated by IFRC, SEARD). However, with the promotion of resilience approach, DM and Health have been merged and thus Community Safety and Resilience Forum has been created and the it has been meeting annually since last year. In addition, a OD and Youth Forum was organised in May 2013 and that forum created OD and Youth Steering Committee. OD is an integral and important component for building resilience. In the absence of integration in OD as one of the major pillars, resilience building is not possible. This has been well recognised by the practitioners and has also been endorsed by the leaders from SEA NS. Therefore, Working Committee for OD has been established and terms of Reference for the same has been prepared. Community safety and Resilience Unit and National Society Development Unit in SEARD are working together. As envisaged by the Leaders and the continued effort at the NS and Regional level, the OD and Youth Steering Committee participated in the Regional Community Safety and Resilience Forum in September.

Expanding on this streamlined integration and embracing the inclusion of OD into overall approach, expanding approaches to promote OD as one of the important pillars of the “Resilience House,” the OD and Youth steering committee met as part of the 2014 SEA Regional CSR Forum to discuss primarily on the technical aspects of OD and to recommend to the entire forum on the important considerations to make for promoting OD in the overall resilience building approach. This was used as a platform by Youth and OD practitioners with a platform to discuss common issues and ideas, share best practices, and develop strategies on how best to integrate OD and Youth into the Community Safety and Resilience Roadmap, Resilience House and further promote the culture of working together to build resilience.

*Methodology/Process*

Meeting in an informal round-table setting, members of the OD and Youth Steering committee as well as technical advisers from the IFRC Southeast Asia Regional Delegation looked at issues of OD and Youth in NS programming through a series of in-depth discussions in a few selected topics: progress since the 2013 OD and Youth conference and aligning actions to the expectations and vision of RCRC NS leadership, OCAC, Resource Management Systems (RMS), addressing Gender & Diversity issues, governance and management, Youth empowerment and engagement, coordination and cooperation, OD and Youth representation and involvement in the CSR Forum.

***Key points of discussion***

Progress since 2013 OD and Youth Forum: Discussing the work that has been done and priorities that have been addressed regarding Youth and OD initiatives since the close of the 2013 OD and Youth Conference it agreed by all that all action should be guided by and aligned with the recommendations from the 2014 Leaders’ meeting. The main recommendations from the Leaders’ meeting make clear that the OD and Youth priorities should be: building the capacity of youth and volunteers; youth development; strengthening Humanitarian Diplomacy, and identifying Gender and Diversity focal points in each NS. A strong focus from the Leaders was the need to invest in youth development; there is a great need to promote youth integration at all levels and to develop strong online communications to enhance the sharing of information, learning experiences and success stories.

OCAC: After learning about MRCS’ experience in successfully completing the OCAC exercise the group agreed that the exercise is beneficial but there were some concerns that not all NS leaders would be willing to partake in this activity. It was decided that MRCS will draft a 1 page concept note on the OCAC experience to advocate for and create awareness on the process. The Chair of the OD and Youth Steering Committee will facilitate to promote the importance of OCAC exercise and share with NS leadership. It was also noted that in discussing NS involvement with OCAC, leaders should be reminded that OCAC is an internal process and the results will not be shared publicly unless the NS wants to do so. It was highlighted that it is an impressive mirroring exercise for the NS to improve, develop and further grow. Piloting of Branch Organisational capacity Assessment ( BOCA) in two Branches in Cambodia was also briefly discussed.

Resource Management Systems (RMS): All in attendance agreed that RMS is an important tool for management purposes. Because this is such an important and useful tool there needs to be a stronger promotion of the use of RMS to all NS. Once way to create such promotion is to illustrate the benefit of RMS to Community Safety and Resilience, specifically through integrated planning and resources mapping.

Addressing Gender & Diversity issues: The ongoing gender and diversity work within the region was discussed. Additionally, everyone agreed that the re-activation of the SEA Regional Gender and Diversity Forum with representatives of each SEA RCRC NS would be a good way forward. It was also recognized that one of the main challenges to this work is a lack of awareness from NS on the complexity of Gender and Diversity. Therefore, it was decided that an “understanding Gender and Diversity” awareness brochure would be created to increase knowledge around this subject area.

Governance and management: A discussion was held on how to best address the relationship between governance and management and how this impacts the effective service delivery of an NS. Despite the sensitive nature of this issue, it needs to be addressed and the first step should be for each NS to be clear on the delineation of roles as set forth in the constitution; there should be a clear distinction of roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability that defined in the Standard Operation Procedure. It was suggested that OCAC could serve as a useful tool to begin discussions on this issue with NS leadership.

Youth empowerment and engagement: The ongoing work of the Southeast Asia Youth Network (SEAYN) was presented to the group. Following this update the group discussed how this network can be best utilized. It was agreed that SEAYN provides a much needed forum to build the capacity of youth in the region and aids in the promotion of youth integration at all levels. It provides a good platform to facilitate the sharing of information, learning experiences and success stories among young people throughout Southeast Asia.

In addition to a discussion on SEAYN, there was also a discussion on the use of the Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change tool. This tool has successfully been launched in Cambodia. It was acknowledged that youth are the link between an NS and the community and YABC serves as an effective tool in providing the skills and guidance to youth that are needed to implement programming on their own. A youth leader involved in YABC shared her experience and expressed her confidence in becoming the agents of behaviour change following her participation in the YABC training. It was recommended to share her experience in the larger CSR Forum the next day.

It was highlighted that OD and Youth Development needs to be promoted in all programmes /projects. Increased investment on youth is needed to further promote youth engagement.

Coordination and cooperation: A strong sentiment from all participants was that there needs to be stronger coordination, cooperation and integration between OD, DM and Health programmes and planning within each NS and at the regional level. In addition to the integration of OD into the more service delivery oriented programs, all DM and Health projects/programs should ensure the allocation of funding for OD and Youth activities; OD and Youth activities are essential foundational pillars to the work of DM and Health however securing funding for such activities is an ongoing challenge within the region. Some initiatives have already been taken in a few National Societies in the region. The examples of Myanmar and Cambodia Red Cross were shared and possibility of its replication in other National Societies was also discussed.

OD and Youth representation and involvement in the CSR Forum: As OD and Youth as crucial foundational aspects for the ongoing DM and Health work within the region, it was agreed by the group that the CSR Forum should have representatives of OD and Youth from all 11 NS in addition to the DM and Health representatives. It was also suggested to have a Youth Representative in the Chair Group as well.

***Key recommendation for the way forward for road map.***

The key recommendations from the OD and Youth group to the larger CSR Forum is as follows.

Include Branch Development, Volunteer Management, Youth Development and engagement, Capacity Building (gender and diversity; finance development; resource mobilization) should be reflected in the Road map.