

International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

SMCC NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL

by Garry Conille and Balthasar Staehelin

Dear readers,

The purpose of this e-newsletter is to keep you up to date with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) process, to illustrate good practices, and to share concrete examples of improvements in Movement coordination and cooperation from a field perspective. We hope that these examples, though only few among many other constructive developments, will be a source of inspiration and will further reinforce the willingness to invest in meaningful and result-oriented Movement coordination for operations.

This time we are presenting you examples from the response to the Ecuador earthquake and the Fiji tropical storm as well as from a joint SMCC working session in Kuala Lumpur. We also make a link with the Movement positioning at the World Humanitarian Summit which, even if not a direct result of the SMCC, certainly benefited from the increased connection and understanding that the SMCC has fostered.

Regarding the implementation of the SMCC Plan of Action, as mentioned in our joint message from June 3, the Joint Implementation Teams are moving forward with the implementation with support of the National Societies who have already expressed interest to participate. Nevertheless, we continue to strongly encourage National Societies to join this process.

To create awareness and engagement in the SMCC process among the leadership and staff of the National Societies, IFRC and ICRC, we are also producing additional promotional material for your use. The material should be available by mid-September and will be shared for possible wide use by all Movement components to help disseminate the SMCC practice and spirit to the different levels and contexts.

We wish to hereby thank our concerned colleagues for their valuable contributions to this newsletter and invite everyone to share with us examples which we can use in the next edition. To do so or share comments/impressions on this e-newsletter, please kindly contact the SMCC Coordination Group (Valpuri Saarelma valpuri.saarelma@ifrc.org and Nicolas Luyet niluyet@icrc.org).

We remain strongly convinced that closer Movement coordination and cooperation has a positive impact on our collective operational outreach, on our visibility and altogether on the Movement's credibility. We look forward to moving this agenda forward with you and wish you a good read.

Kind regards,
Balthasar and Garry

WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

"The Movement. The ICRC and the IFRC both did well. The former won praise for what people continue to see as its singular role on the frontlines of humanitarian action while the IFRC, with its National Societies, is the embodiment of local knowledge and grassroots engagement." This is how Nick van Praag, director of Ground Truth, described the presence of the Movement in his list of "winners" at the WHS.

This shows that continuous and significant investment from the Movement paid off at the Summit. The common and coordinated voice that the Movement managed to present in Istanbul was noticed and appreciated.

The Movement delegation represented only two per cent of the Summit's participants, and yet it was closely involved in five of the seven high-level summits and around half of the special sessions. This coherence was made possible by our well-organized preparation, which included the "Message to the WHS" of the 2015 Council of Delegates, a workshop organized by the Turkish Red Crescent Society, IFRC and ICRC, and a publication - *Istanbul And Beyond*.

[...]

Up-date: the progress of SMCC implementation

At the Council of Delegates (CoD) 2015, the Movement strongly endorsed the SMCC Resolution, including its Report and Plan of Action (PoA), setting a clear path towards improving the way the Movement works together in large-scale emergencies.

The focus in this new phase of the SMCC is on a) improving joint preparedness through, for example, Movement Coordination Agreements and Movement contingency planning, b) making emergency response more efficient through rapid attribution of coordination responsibilities and ensuring complementary action, and c) ensuring a coherent Movement positioning through well-coordinated and timely communication as well as efficient interaction with donors, ideally with only one international appeal being released.

The SMCC project continues to be lead jointly by the ICRC and IFRC, both calling for continued National Society involvement in the process. A key aspect of the implementation is the Joint Implementation Teams (JIT) which consist of relevant IFRC and ICRC technical people and the interested NS participants. The teams work based on the SMCC PoA which is developed into an activity log providing more details on the various steps and time-lines set to implement the actions.

To ensure NS engagement, messages (the first on 18th March 2016) have been sent to all NS with the invitation to join the PoA implementation. While close to 20 NS have already expressed their interest, some regions are still absent or under-represented. In order to effectively represent our Movement's diversity, we continue to encourage particularly NS from the Americas, the Middle East and Asia Pacific to join the implementation. Practically, we recommend NS to review the various actions in the PoA and to let us know in which actions you would like to contribute to.

The IFRC and ICRC teams continue to advance the implementation and one of the results is being shared as annex to this Newsletter in the form of a "guidance note and check-list" for the "Mini-Summit". This document should be central to ensuring efficient Movement coordination from the onset of a large-scale emergency as the "Mini-Summit" should take place within the first 24/48 hours of an emergency. The note guides how to organize the "Mini Summit" and the check-list frames the questions to be answered and decision to be taken at a "Mini Summit". The guidance and the check-list are presented as a draft and will be adapted based on lessons learnt from operational use. We encourage National Societies to disseminate and use this note and to share with the SMCC coordination group any comments that could help improve the document

Another important step forward is the pre-identification of five potential countries - one per region with different humanitarian and Movement environment - to serve as contexts with focused effort on Movement coordination (so called SMCC laboratories). In these contexts, the aim is to improve coordination and cooperation while piloting new SMCC products/tools. While the SMCC team will place a special attention to and investment in these contexts this should not affect the development of SMCC-related initiatives in other contexts.

Should your National Society have ideas on ways to improve Movement coordination and cooperation either in your specific context or globally, do not hesitate to get in touch with the closest representation of the IFRC or the ICRC or directly with the SMCC coordination team.

[...]

This publication was setting clear messages on agreed areas of concern to the Movement: Protecting the dignity of every human being and improving humanitarian access to those in need; Affirming the complementarity of local, national and international action; Taking the long view of people's needs; and Recognizing and enabling different humanitarian systems.

The Movement also aligned on issues such as migration and the Grand Bargain, etc.

The Movement also championed the need to recognize a diverse ecosystem of humanitarian responders, which was then echoed by a significant number of stakeholders.

The Movement delegation also aligned its stance on commitments, meaning that we, as a distinct Movement, would echo previous pledges from our own Conferences in the WHS but not report through any UN commitments monitoring system. The WHS was also one of the first occasions for a highly visible use of the newly-adopted Movement logo.

While not directly linked to the SMCC, the Movement's success at the WHS echoes the ambition of one of the SMCC Plan of Action objectives: *"The Movement effectively positions itself by presenting strong and coherent messages, maximizing the communication potential of each component and enhancing the public profile of the Movement in large-scale emergencies."*

Ecuador earthquake: A complementary Movement response

By the Ecuadorian Red Cross, the IFRC and ICRC teams

At 7 p.m. on 16 April 2016 an earthquake of magnitude 7.8 on the Richter scale hit Ecuador's Northern coast, notably the provinces of Manabí and Esmeraldas. Official figures indicate close to 700 casualties, more than 6,000 injured, and some 30,000 people made homeless. Within hours, Movement partners were in contact with each other and from Sunday 17 April onwards IFRC and ICRC delegates participated in the Situation Room of the Ecuadorian Red Cross.

From the outset, two main Movement bases were established in the field, one in Portoviejo, the other in Pedernales. The IFRC sent experienced field staff to both locations to ensure coordination within the Movement and with other partners (mainly government and UN structures). This was essential and helped streamline field activities. ICRC integrated into these local structures and participated in daily Movement meetings.

With the Ecuadorian Red Cross leading the response operation with the support of the IFRC, the Movement partners agreed on a complementary way of operating. Regional capacities and assets (such as RITs) were prioritized as the international support to the Ecuadorian Red Cross. Several National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies took part in the operation, particularly with large contingents from Colombia and Mexico, but also from the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the American, Canadian, Argentinian and Peruvian Red Cross societies.

The Restoring Family Links activities supported by ICRC (e.g. coaching Ecuadorian Red Cross on database administration) and the costs of ICRC involvement (17 forensic experts flown in from Latin America to support authorities in approaching destroyed/damaged sites and handling of human remains) were included in the IFRC appeal. This aligned approach has been essential and has allowed donors to be approached by only one component of the Movement.

In terms of communication, the Ecuadorian Red Cross, the IFRC and the ICRC were in permanent coordination. After a support mission to Manta and Portoviejo, it was suggested that a video be produced to highlight the Movement response on behalf of people affected by the quake. The purpose of the video is to illustrate a successful joint Movement action, which can be used internally as well as for an external public. Two joint press conferences were also organized.

Strengthening joint preparedness and response in Asia Pacific

By ICRC and IFRC teams in Kuala Lumpur

The IFRC and the ICRC joined forces and held a joint workshop at the regional level in Kuala Lumpur to see how the spirit of cooperation can be built upon to achieve tangible results at country level. While at the regional level there is a lot of proximity and dialogue on Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation, at the field level the teams are often located in different offices and working on different priorities. To be more effective in supporting preparedness and response, the IFRC and ICRC teams need to plan together and build relationships in the calm times to have the trust and agreement to respond collectively. Therefore, the aim of the joint day was to ensure that both teams have a common understanding of the SMCC process and most importantly to commit to a simple plan of action for each context in order to translate talk into action.

At the workshop the participants first discussed within their respective country / sub regional teams topics such as SMCC, Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance, and civil military relations. In the afternoon they focused on key commitments around some of the SMCC topics, such as the Movement Response Cycle. The feedback from the teams for the joint day was very positive, providing a valuable opening of an active dialogue. Since, there have already been some follow up meetings in the field such as the discussions of the "Manila plan of action" and the ICRC participation in the cyclone preparedness meeting in Bangladesh. The IFRC regional team in Kuala Lumpur continues to work with the ICRC towards further developing a plan of action to drive the process forward beyond ad hoc initiatives.

As a follow-up, an online survey is planned by the end of the year to see if National Societies in the region have experienced an improvement in coordination and cooperation. Consultation with National Societies of the region and bringing them on board the SMCC roll-out are also vital next steps.

Fiji: Communication coordination in the wake of Cyclone Winston

By Fiji Red Cross Society-IFRC-ICRC joint communication team in Fiji

Close cooperation between the communication teams of Fiji Red Cross Society, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has helped the Movement's voice in the Pacific to become stronger and clearer. This close cooperation has also resulted in effective coordination between the Red Cross teams and serves as an example of successful Movement coordination between the components of the Movement.

This Movement cooperation was particularly evident in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Winston in March 2016, when the IFRC enlisted the help of the ICRC communication officer for one week as both the IFRC communications manager and the Fiji Red Cross international humanitarian law (IHL) dissemination and communication officer were overseas, attending a workshop. The request was made to ensure that the Red Cross could secure a strong and visible presence from the onset of the raging storm. It was agreed that the ICRC communication officer would accompany Fiji Red Cross volunteers in the field, and collect stories and images on the Fiji Red Cross response to Cyclone Winston, supported by the IFRC.

The IFRC communications manager briefed the ICRC communication officer on the standard requirements and protocols before his departure. Arrangements were quickly made and the ICRC communication officer joined a team of Fiji Red Cross volunteers on the very next day, who were carrying out assessments and relief distribution in the badly damaged interior of Viti Levu. During the trip, the ICRC communication officer spent time with those severely affected to hear first-hand their stories, as well as those of the volunteers.

One of the stories was published on the IFRC web site under the ICRC staffer's byline – "By Gillian Hickes, ICRC", the first time many can remember such cross-posting happening. The ICRC communications officer's photos were also used in a photo album on the IFRC's web site.

The Red Cross communications staff in Suva are always looking for ways to work together and enhance the profile of each other's work. Another great example of collaboration was the IFRC publishing a story about a Red Cross message that was collected by ICRC from a prison in Fiji and delivered by volunteers of Fiji Red Cross. The IFRC communications delegate was present when the message was delivered and took photos. The Fiji Red Cross communications volunteer interviewed the recipient about the letter and wrote a story, working together with the IFRC and ICRC to ensure that the privacy of the people involved were respected. After the story was published on the IFRC web site, The ICRC tweeted the link to the article in order to increase its reach among their audience.

"I am not surprised the Pacific is leading the way with examples of excellent Movement collaboration," said Soneel Ram, Fiji Red Cross IHL dissemination and communications officer. "Our three offices are within walking distance of each other in Suva, and working together is simply the Pacific way."



The joint « Movement » communication team in Fiji

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