

SRC PMER Capacity Building Review (Bangladesh, Sudan, South Sudan)



Time: 18:05, Local Time (GMT +08:00)

International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
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*Review of Swedish Red Cross
PMER Capacity Building support
to South Sudan Red Cross*

Group Webex call
22 September 2016

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Acknowledgements

The team would like to thank staff and volunteers from the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, the Sudanese Red Crescent and the South Sudan Red Cross, as well as staff from the IFRC and in-country Movement partners who took the time to participate in this participatory project review.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Swedish Red Cross (SRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) seeks to review the PMER capacity building support provided to selected National Societies (NS) by SRC and/or IFRC during the period 2012 until present.

In view of limited resources and time constraints, it was agreed to carry out the review in three of the initially planned five countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, South Sudan and Sudan).

1.2 Review criteria

The focus of the review is on five primary criteria:

- Relevance and Appropriateness
- Effectiveness
- Impact
- Coherence
- Sustainability and Connectedness

1. Introduction continued

1.3 Audience

NS, IFRC, and other relevant Movement partners.

1.4 Timeline for the review

From 22 August to 4 November 2016.

1.5 Location

Reviews conducted separately in three targeted NS: Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) and South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC). In view of the security situation in South Sudan at the time of the review, the review in SSRC was carried out with a remote method (online survey followed up by a webinar discussion).

1.6 Target groups

From nine (9) to twenty six (26) targeted participants (NS, IFRC, SRC and other relevant Movement partners) in a workshop in each project country.

2. Review Methodology

2.1 Desktop Review

Project documentation, as well as secondary data provided by project partners.

2.2 Participatory Project Review (PPR)

It is an internal form of assessment and identification and analysis of key findings, lessons and recommendations to inform future programming and strategic decision making. It is based on the Empowerment Evaluation approach (David Fetterman) and the Most Significant Change approach (Rick Davies and Jessica Dart).

2.2 Participatory Project Review (PPR) continued

The remote and in-country PPRs were organized around the following four interactive exercises:



Historical Timeline Exercise

Factual review of what has happened from 2012 to 2016



Project Challenge Exercise

What has been a significant challenge to learn from in the implementation of this project?



Project Success Exercise

What has been a significant success to learn from in the implementation of this project?









Future Recommendations Exercise

If you were to do this project again, what would you do differently to improve it?

2. Review Methodology continued

2.3 Overview of the PPR by NS

Type of activity	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS)	Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS)	South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC)
PPR Method	In-country workshop	In-country workshop	Remote (Survey/Webinar)
PPR Dates	27-28 September (1.5 days)	6 October	Online survey (13-20 September) Group webex (20 September)
Debrief & Follow up	29 September	7 October	29 September
Facilitator	M. Tsukamoto	M. Chenon	C. Sim
Participants	26 participants (20 from BDRCS, 4 from IFRC, 1 from SRC and 1 from ICRC)	19 participants (14 from SRCS, 1 from IFRC and 4 from PNS)	9 participants (SSRC)
	 8  18	 9  10	 5  4

3. Methodological limitations

Overall

Given the participatory approach taken in the main method used for this review it has not been possible to answer all the evaluation questions in the ToR in detail. The evaluation questions were used as a guide to stimulate thought and discussions amongst the participants, rather than as a requirement. It was felt that this approach was more powerful, since it allowed participants' voices to be heard on what they felt was most important to them related to the five primary evaluation criteria/questions.

In the case of the remote PPR, the online survey was also used in this same manner. The participants in the PPRs have formulated the main findings and recommendations coming out from this review. In order to manage expectations, the recommendations from the in-country PPRs were framed through PPR follow-up exercises to help guide their future implementation.

3.1 Bangladesh

- The national strike in the NS prior to the PPR may have had an influence on participation levels.

3.2 South Sudan

- The number of people (9) who attended the webinar varied from the number of people who completed the survey (10).
- People were not familiar with the interactive tool within the webinar for the remote PPR. The orientation session for this tool took much longer than expected.
- Due to technical problems, it was not possible to carry out the initial findings at the scheduled hour.

4. Findings

4.1 Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS)

- In country PPR

350,000

people reached through
Disaster response and Early
Recovery Programmes



903,621

people reached through Long Term
services and Development Programmes



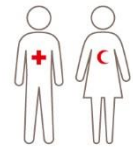
CHF 6,911,501
income in 2015



68
branches



502
paid staff



61,331
volunteers



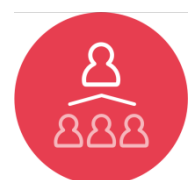
CHF 6,482,244
expenditure in 2015



OCAC
completed on
March 2014



PMER
mentioned in
Strategic Plan



PMER Unit
formed in 2012
with 2 staff

4.1 BDRCS - In country PPR continued



4.1.1 There were 26 people who participated in this historical timeline exercise.

PPR participants identified historical milestones during the project period 2012 to present.

- ✓ Project activities ranged from the establishment of the PMER section in the BDRCS section (2012) to the support provided in creating strategic plans, logical frameworks, monthly activity reports, country operational plans and improved ToRs for evaluations (2016).
- ✓ As can be seen from the photo, the number of activities mentioned in PMER capacity building support clearly increased from 2012 (6 mentions) to 2016 (10 mentions). Participants contributed the largest number of activities in 2015 (34 mentions).



4.1 BDRCS - In country PPR continued



4.1.2 There were 17 people who participated in this **significant change exercise (successes)**.

PPR participants highlighted a total of 52 successes that were grouped into 8 categories. The top 5 categories were as follows:

1. **Sensitization on PMER**
2. **Increased skills development in PMER through trainings, orientation and mentoring**
3. **Support provided to strategic plans and strategic plan mid-term review**
4. **Development of BDRCS PMER Capacity Development Project**
5. **Technical assistance provided to surveys (baseline, endline etc) and planning projects (Gender and Diversity /DRR)**

ITEMS	SUCCESSSES	RATING
Sensitization on PMER		22
Timely provision of PMER to development of project / plan of action	(planning) (technical supports)	5
Improved PMER standards in project management (systems)		7
Increased skills development in PMER through trainings/ orientation/ mentoring		14
Improved timeliness and quality of reports		8
Support provided to strategic and SP mid-term review		12
Development of the BDRCS PMER Capacity Development Project		11
Technical assistance provided to surveys (baseline, endline) and planning project (Gender, Diversity /DRR)		9

4.1 BDRCS - In country PPR continued



4.1.3 There were 17 people who participated in this **significant change exercise (challenges)**.

PPR participants highlighted a total of 49 challenges that were grouped into 13 categories. The top 5 categories were as follows:

1. **Maintaining sustainability of PMER (personnel, financial and knowledge)**
2. **Lack of ownership by National Society**
3. **Lack of human resources for PMER**
4. **Mainstreaming PMER systems within BDRCS**
5. **Alignment of BDRCS and Movement partners on PMER standards and requirements.**

CHALLENGES	
Lack of evaluation culture	05
(PNS, IFRC, BDRCS target population) Stakeholder participation in project development	00
Lack of ownership by NS	07
PMER tasked with activities out of PMER scope	01
Mainstreaming PMER with BDRCS (systems)	07
Maintaining sustainability of PMER (personnel, financial, knowledge)	14
Lack of understanding of importance of PMER	06
Limited HR for PMER	08
Lack of a harmonized PMER system in BDRCS	05
↑ Coverage of PMER training so it reaches all staff in BDRCS	01
Different reporting demands for BDRCS (Internal/external)	0
Alignment of BDRCS and Movement partners on PMER standards/requirements	07
Lack of coordination amongst PMER practitioners and programme on project management	5

4.1 BDRCS - In country PPR continued



4.1.4 There were 22 people who participated in this **future recommendations exercise**.

PPR participants highlighted a total of 19 recommendations of which 14 received votes. The group chose to come up with the recommendations mainly in a plenary session. The top 5 categories were as follows:

1. **Increase interest by partners to provide support (HR, finance and technical knowledge) while giving ownership to NS**
2. **Increase personnel (additional 2) in BDRCS PMER section**
3. **Increase knowledge and skills in PMER for project/programme manager, unit level officers and National Headquarters staff through trainings and regular follow up.**
4. **Increase involvement of senior management to allow the roll out of PMER issues.**
5. **Establish a regular monitoring system in BDRCS projects and regular programmes.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

R	V	L	R	I	C
1	10	P	All	0-3 yrs	- Discussions w/ PMS - Donor requirements - Funding - Strategic plan
2	1	P	BDRCS	New (Sept) onwards	
3	9	P	BDRCS	0-2 yrs	
4	10	P	BDRCS	6m - 1 yr	
5	1	P	BDRCS	New (Sept) onwards	
6	5	Pw/1	(ALL) BDRCS/IFRC/SRC	0-2 yrs	- Need to be agreed w/ project manager
7	1	P	src BDRCS IFRC	New (Sept) onwards	
8	6	P	BDRCS	0-1 yr	
9	1	P	BDRCS	6 months onwards	
10	4	P	ALL	3 months onwards	
11					
12					
13					
14	4	P	BDRCS	6 months onwards	
15					
16					
17	4	P	IFRC/SRC/BDRCS	0-2 yrs	
18	3	P	IFRC/BDRCS	1 yr +	
19	6	Pw/limit	BDRCS/SRC	6 months onwards	Skills needed to be available

4.2 Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS)

- In country PPR

5,492,100

people reached through
Disaster response and Early
Recovery Programmes



3,415,031

people reached through Long Term
services and Development Programmes



CHF 20,250,793

income in 2015



14

branches



508

paid staff



130,566

volunteers



CHF 19,707,960

expenditure in 2015



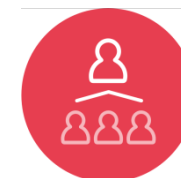
OCAC

not yet
completed



PMER

mentioned in
Strategic Plan



PMER Unit

formed in 2013
with 4 staff

4.2 SRCS - In country PPR continued



4.2.1 There were 19 people participating in this **historical timeline exercise**.

To warm up, the participants were asked to identify one significant activity each in the PMER CB support from 2012 and onwards. The number of mentioned activities per year was 1 in 2012, 5 in 2013, 4 in 2014, 3 in 2015, and 4 in 2016.

- ✓ The project activities ranged from the development of reporting formats (2012) to the establishment of the PMER unit (2013), the introduction of Accountability to Beneficiaries in 2014 and its roll-out in some branches in 2015 and several evaluations carried out in 2016.



4.2 SRCS - In country PPR continued



4.2.2 There were 19 people participating in this **significant change exercise (successes)**.

There were 17 changes identified in total, which were grouped into 10 categories. All categories received votes. The most significant changes to take from the implementation of the PMER CB support in Sudan were:

1. **Enhanced participation of staff, volunteers, and targeted communities in planning, monitoring, and evaluation.**
2. **Increased use of PME tools at branch level.**
3. **Easier to monitor and report on progress for HQ and branches.**
4. **Introduction of AtB to NS programmes and operations.**
5. **Improved reporting quality and timeliness.**



4.2 SRCS - In country PPR continued



4.2.3 There were 19 people participating in this **significant change exercise (challenges)**.

Twenty-five (25) challenges were identified in total, which were grouped into 11 categories and all received votes. The most significant challenges were:

1. **The dual role of the PMER unit as both PMER technical support and sector coordinators.**
2. **Limited funding for PMER.**
3. **The role of the PMER department not properly understood internally at the SRCS.**
4. **PMER capacity among staff needs to be improved.**
5. **The high turnover of staff at the PMER unit.**



4.2 SRCS - In country PPR continued



4.2.4 There were 17 people participating in this **future recommendations exercise**.

Thirty-two (32) recommendations were identified in total, which were grouped into 15 categories. Out of these, 11 categories received votes. The top 5 recommendations were:

- 1. Increase interest by partners to provide support (HR, finance and technical knowledge).**
- 2. PMER staff to allocate their time only to PMER.**
- 3. Institutionalized PMER system in SRCS and increased support for PMER from branches, HQ, and senior management.**
- 4. Increase knowledge and skills in PMER for staff at all levels through capacity building.**
- 5. Maintaining sustainability of PMER (personnel, financial and knowledge).**



4.3 South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC)

- Remote PPR

121,318

people reached through
Disaster response and Early
Recovery Programmes



3,627,041

people reached through Long Term
services and Development Programmes



CHF 234,316

income in 2015



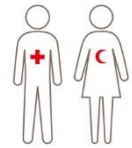
55

branches



511

paid staff



4,547

volunteers



CHF 252,520

expenditure in 2015



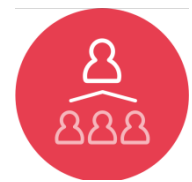
OCAC

completed on
November 2015



PMER

mentioned in
Strategic Plan



PMER Unit

formed in 2015
with 2 staff

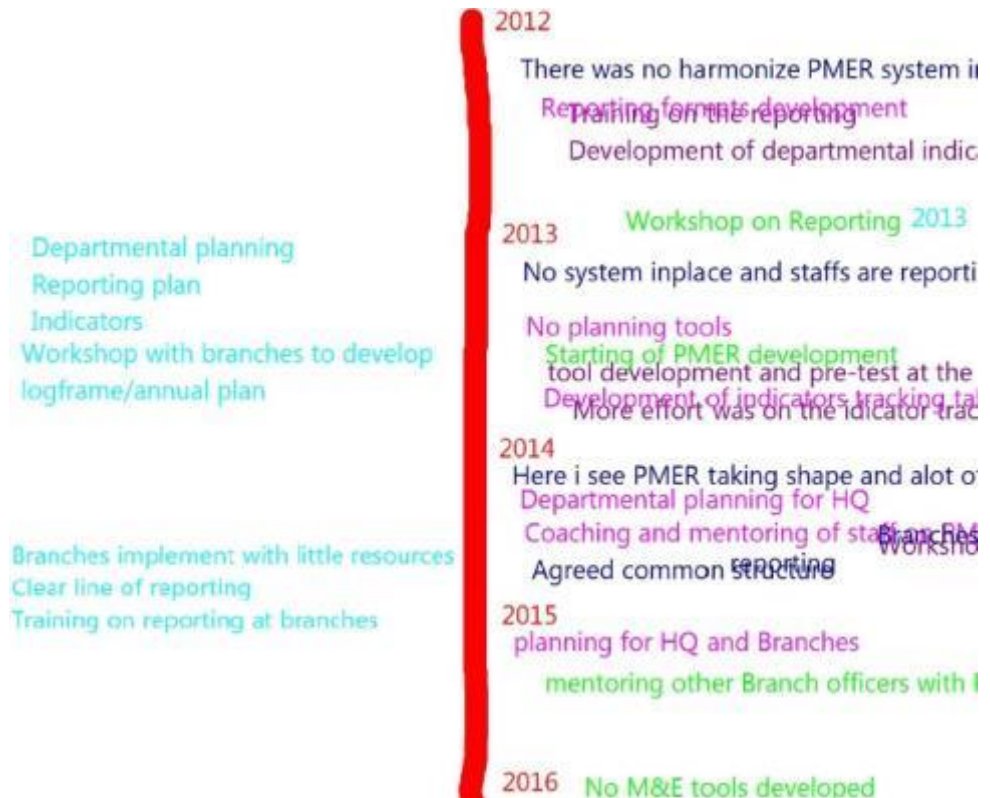
4.3 SSRC - Remote PPR continued



4.3.1 There were 9 people who participated in this **historical timeline exercise**.

PPR participants identified historical milestones during the project period 2012 to present.

- ✓ Project activities ranged from the Reporting formats and departmental indicators being developed (2012) to Branches are implementing PMER tools with little resources (2016).
- ✓ As can be seen from the interactive slide, participants contributed the largest number of activities in 2013 (12 mentions).



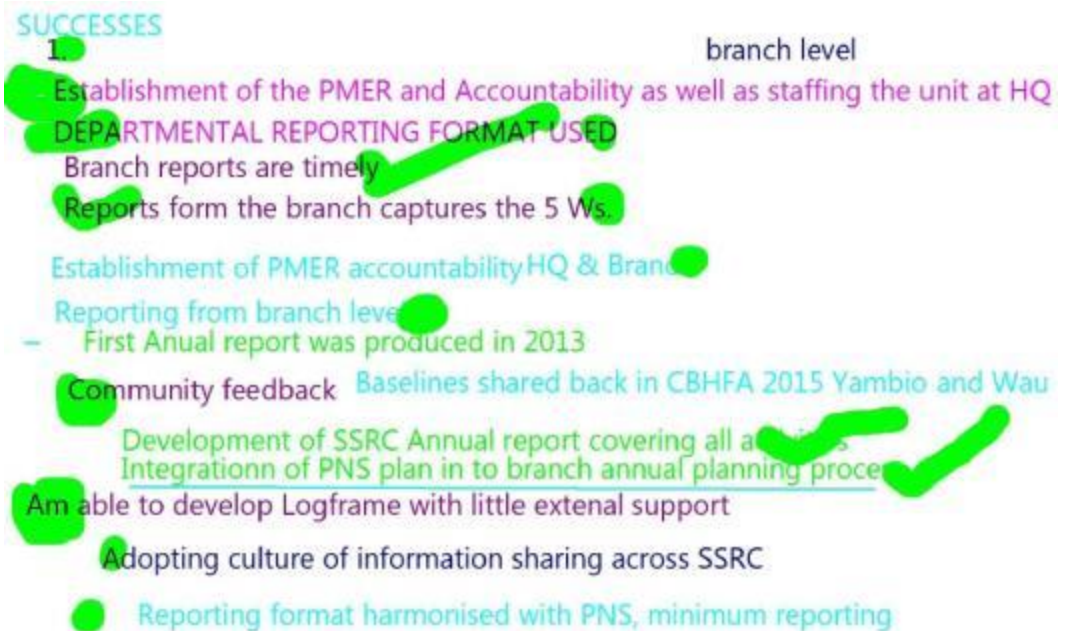
4.3 SSRC - Remote PPR continued



4.3.2 There were 9 people who participated in this **significant change exercise (successes)**.

PPR participants highlighted a total of 21 successes that were grouped into 7 categories. The top 5 categories were as follows:

1. **Departmental reporting format used.**
2. **Reports from Branches captured the 5 Ws and submitted timely to HQ.**
3. **Participatory Branch-to-HQ annual planning process.**
4. **Increased PMER practices and accountability at HQ and branches.**
5. **Improved harmonisation of planning and reporting with PNS.**



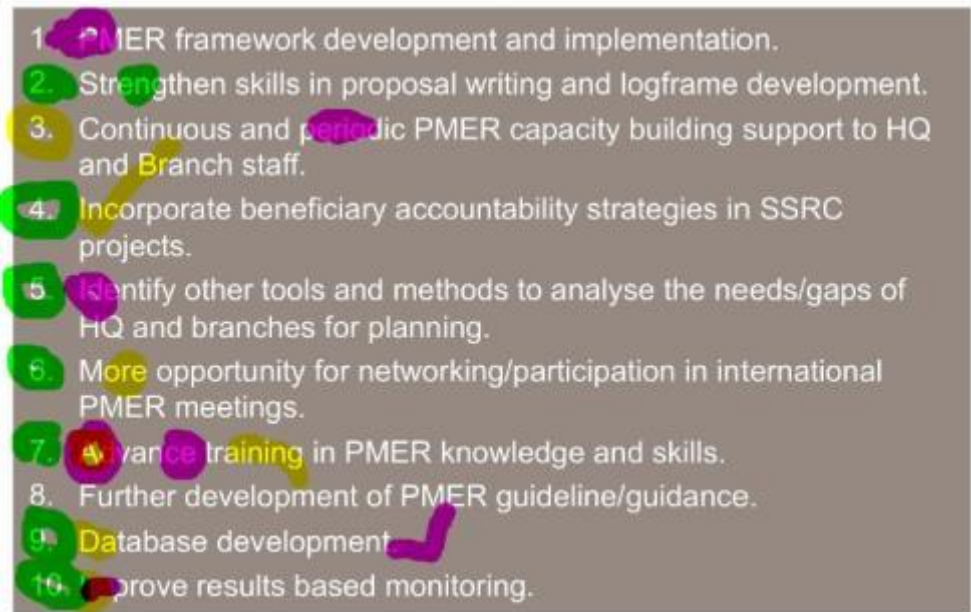
4.3 SSRC - Remote PPR continued



4.3.3 There were 9 people who participated in this **significant change exercise (challenges)**.

PPR participants highlighted a total of 20 challenges that were grouped into 7 categories. The top 5 categories were as follows:

1. **Lack of continuous PMER capacity building support to HQ and Branch staff.**
2. **Inability to measure evidenced based success.**
3. **Absence of a centralised database system in SSRC.**
4. **Delayed roll-out of PMER framework in SSRC.**
5. **Limited beneficiary accountability strategies in SSRC projects.**



4.3 SSRC - Remote PPR continued



4.3.4 There were 9 people who participated in this **future recommendations exercise**.

PPR participants highlighted a total of 14 recommendations. Due to time constraint, the participants did not manage to do a prioritisation process for the recommendations. Below are 5 broad areas of the 14 recommendations:

1. Advanced PMER skills training and M&E training for all staff.

2. External technical support on development of data management system.

3. Identify other tools appropriate for improving PMER practices.

4. Incorporate cross-cutting elements in existing PMER tools.

5. Regular visit to Branches from HQ for M&E purpose.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Technical support to SSRC in areas of proposal writing and data management systems both Branch and HQ

Need to revise PMER tools to incorporate the cross cutting themes

Technical and financial support to the PMER unit

Need of PMER supporting delegate on short time base

M& E training

Database / Archive establishment

Regular visit to Branches from HQ - for monitoring and evaluation

Advanced PMER Training in Branch level

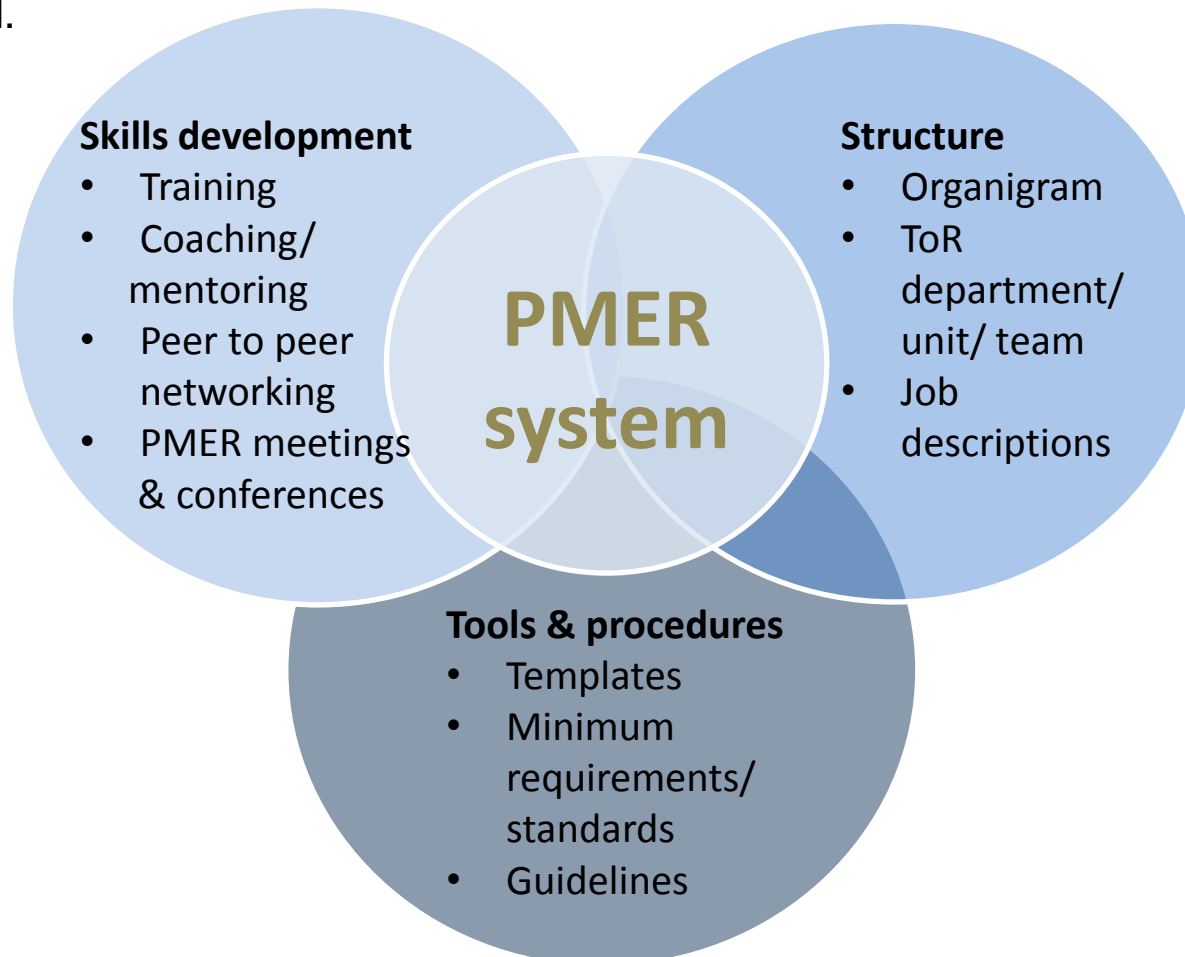
More support on M&E

Identify other tools for PMER

Technical and financial support to the PMER unit for both staff and volunteers

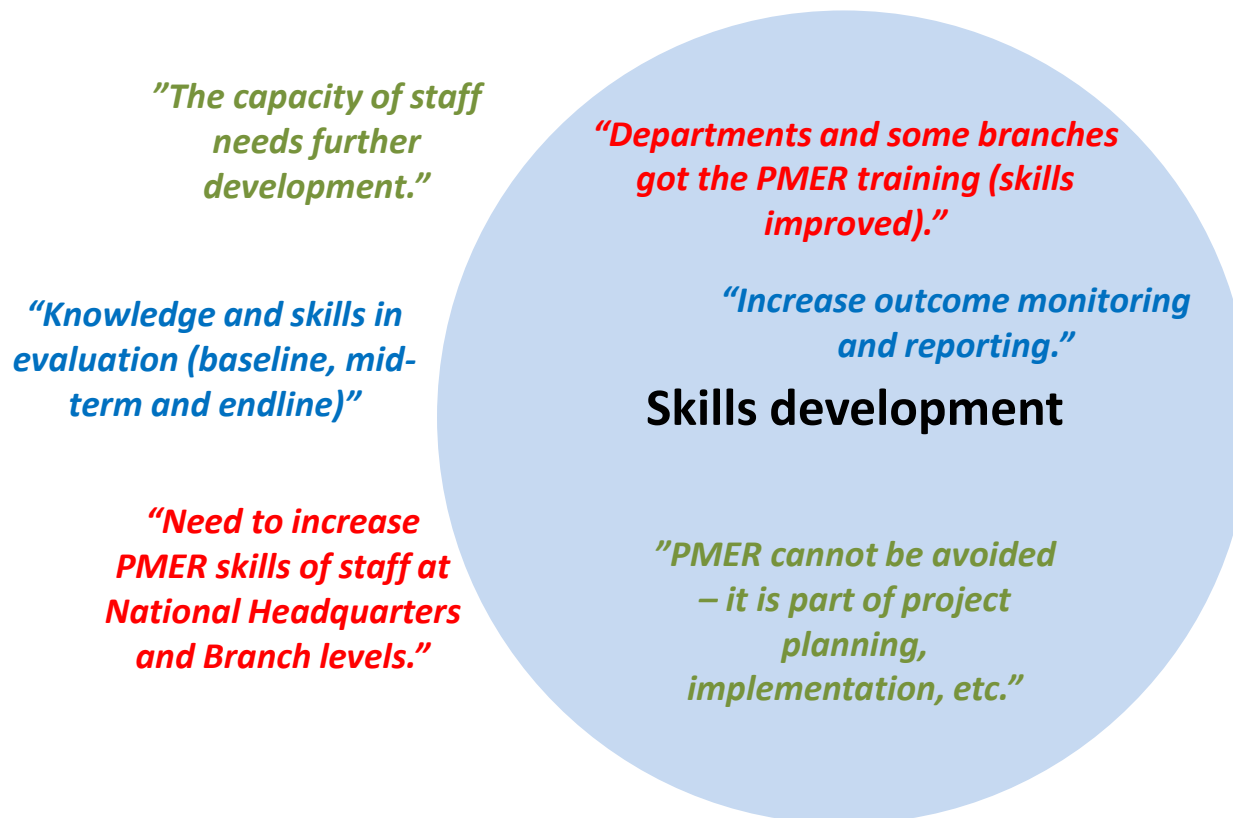
5. Conclusion and Trends

Based on the findings from Bangladesh, South Sudan and Sudan, the diagram below illustrates PMER capacity building. In order to have a robust PMER system, the following three key components would be needed: skills development, structure, and tools and procedures. Activities in each of these components were mentioned by participants during the PPR workshops. The components are further explained in the next three slides and interesting individual quotes from the three NS on changes as well as challenges are highlighted.



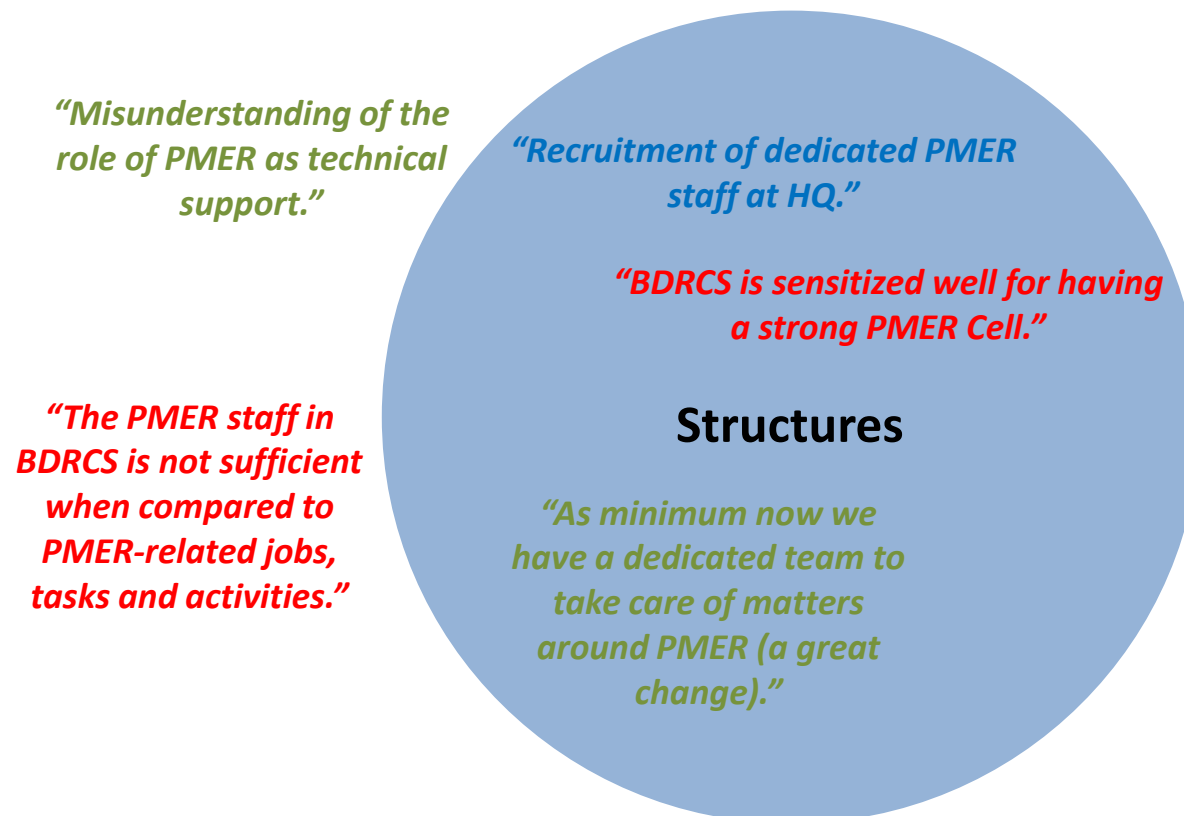
5. Conclusion and Trends continued

Skills development takes place on an individual level and aims at strengthening knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes. In the three NS, the evaluators noted examples of *formal* (ex. online/offline trainings) and *informal* (ex. mentoring, coaching, PMER networks, conferences and meetings) skills development through the group discussions/prioritization exercises. Below are some of the significant changes mentioned by the NS (within the circle), as well as examples of challenges in the area of skills development (to the left of the circle).



5. Conclusion and Trends continued

Regarding structures, it was noted in all three NS that efforts had been made in setting up formal PMER structures within the organization. This included PMER functions in the NS structure and developing job descriptions or terms of reference to institutionalize PMER support. These functions were responsible for PMER activities and in providing different levels of technical assistance in planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Below are some of the significant changes mentioned by the NS (within the circle), as well as examples of challenges in the area of skills development (to the left of the circle).



5. Conclusion and Trends continued

Development of tools and procedures in PMER has been an important part of the institutional PMER CB in the targeted NS. A number of written materials such as templates, guidelines, and standards have been produced to support the practice of PMER in the NS. Below are some of the significant changes mentioned by the NS (within the circle), as well as examples of challenges in the area of skills development (to the left of the circle).

“Alignment/acceptance of BDRCS and Movement partners on PMER standards/requirements.”

“To expand PMER to the community level bearing in mind we are a community-based organization.”

“Need to develop monitoring checklist.”

“Now it became easy for SRCS HQ and branch level to follow up and monitor the progress of implementation of projects.”

Tools and procedures

“Roll out of departmental report tracking on quarterly basis”

“Any new project follows the PMER template (LFA).”

6. Key Observations

6.1 PPR Method

6.1.1 Volunteers should be included as part of the participant list for these type of in-country exercises in order to allow the exchange of views from all levels of the National Society.

6.1.2 Depending upon the National Society, it is important to consider any local language needs in group discussions.

6.1.3 PMER and/or relevant programme staff need to be involved in the preparation of the PPR workshop, as well as in the action planning in order to ensure follow up and continuity.

6.1.4 In order to ensure a successful PPR, especially if a remote method is used, it is important to have a focal point from the National Society coordinating and clarifying participants' concerns related to the PPR prior to the workshop.

6.1.5 For a remote PPR, it is important to have a person managing the webinar, in order to allow the facilitator to carry out the PPR.

6. Key Observations continued

6.2 PPR Findings

6.2.1 One key observation from the review is the variety of approaches in PMER CB taken on by the three National Societies. The illustration of PMER CB on slide 25 serves as a categorization of the activities and captures what components should be in place in a full PMER system, and could serve as the basis for further discussions on PMER CB with NS and Movement partners. However, a crucial aspect is the importance of context-specific approaches that are in line with the priorities and expressed needs of the NS.

6.2.2 It is also interesting to see how NS ownership in the PMER CB processes has been enhanced. The increased emphasis on participatory approaches as the basis for the PMER CB support taken on during the roll-out, expressed in the use of self-assessments rather than SRC assessments as well as the participatory method chosen for this review, seems to have been effective to enhance NS-driven approaches to PMER CB.

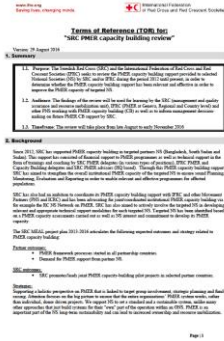
6. Key Observations continued

6.2.3 Another key observation is the increased emphasis on approaching PMER CB in a holistic manner and also enhancing an enabling environment for PMER CB. From an initial focus on developing templates and establishing PMER units within the NS, there is now also a focus on strengthening the buy-in and support from senior management as well as partners for PMER CB.

6.2.4 While there were no specific objectives formulated for the PMER CB support provided to the three NS other than to improve the PMER capacities scored low in the SRC assessments or self-assessments, it is possible to conclude that progress has been made on the first expected impact on learning in the SRC MEAL project plan and the expected result to promote or lead PMER CB pilot projects in selected partner countries. On the other hand, the ambition to initiate PMER framework processes in all partnership countries has not been achieved. Whereas the support has been and should continue to be demand-driven, this goal seems challenging to fully achieve. While some NS have requested support to develop PMER frameworks, others face other challenges and have other priorities when it comes to PMER development.

7. Annexes

7.1 Terms of Reference



7.2 Bangladesh



7.3 Sudan



7.4 South Sudan



Click the above icon to download the annexes

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