

REAL TIME EVALUATION FOR THE RESPONSE TO HURRICANE DORIAN IN THE BAHAMAS



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Cover Image: One of many destroyed homes and properties on Abaco, the most seriously impacted part of The Bahamas by Hurricane Dorian.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ARO	Americas Regional Office
BRCS	The Bahamas Red Cross Society
CCST	Country Cluster Support Team
CEA	Community Engagement and Accountability
CHF	Swiss Franc
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DOSS	Department of Social Services
DRA	Disaster Reconstruction Authority
DREF	Disasters Relief Emergency Fund
EMT	Evaluation Management Team
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
EPoA	Emergency Plan of Action
ERU	Emergency Response Unit
FACT	Field Assessment Co-ordination Team
FGD	Focus group discussion
ICRC	international Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IM	Information Management
ITT	Information Technology and Telecommunications
KII	Key informant interview
NEMA	Emergency Management Agency
NS	National Society
NSD	National Society Development
OCAC	Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification
ODK	Open Data Kit
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OSCaR	Open Source Case Management and Record Keeping System
PER	Preparedness for Effective Response
PGI	Protection, Gender and Inclusion
PMER	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
PNS	Partner National Society
RDRT	Regional Disaster Response Team
RTE	Real Time Evaluation
SOP	Standard Operations Procedure
SSCT	Shelter Sector Co-ordination Team
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

KEY TERMINOLOGY

IFRC Secretariat: Refers to the entire IFRC Secretariat structure (Geneva, Regional Country Teams, and Country Cluster Support Teams).

Geneva Office: Refers to the Secretariat office in Geneva.

IFRC Network: Refers to the IFRC Secretariat, plus its member Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Movement: Refers to all parts of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the IFRC Secretariat, plus its member Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and can be abbreviated as RCM or RCRC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HURRICANE DORIAN

On 1 September 2019, Hurricane Dorian hit the northern Bahamas with winds of up to 298km/h, reaching Category 5 on the Saffir-Simpson hurricane wind scale, and gusts of up to 335km/h. This surpassed known meteorological records as the strongest Atlantic hurricane documented to directly impact a land mass since records began.

Hurricane Dorian was classified as a Category Orange situation by the IFRC. The storm battered the Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama island for almost two days in what has been described as a “*stationary hurricane*”. The southern eyewall of the hurricane, for example, remained fixed over Grand Bahama for about 30 hours. Other islands in the north-west were affected for a total of 68 hours. Overall, Dorian dropped an estimated 0.9m of rain over the Bahamas. According to the Bahamas Department of Meteorology, the storm surge provoked a tide of 6.1-7.6m, causing loss of lives and assets as well as damage to infrastructure and contamination of soils and well in many coastal zones.

People affected by the disaster include, Bahamian citizens from Grand Bahama and Abaco and people of Haitian descent residing in Bahamas. While some of the latter segment of the displaced population are regularised and reside under work permits, many were/are present in Bahamas without immigration status, have missing documentation or could be stateless, which made them particularly vulnerable in the aftermath of the Hurricane.

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

Prior to Hurricane Dorian, the Bahamas Red Cross Society (BRCS) was primarily focused on the provision of social welfare service, with some limited presence on some of the Family Islands. Already engaged in the process of National Society Development, the organisation was undergoing – or had just recently undergone – some key changes to personnel.

The National Society was not prepared for an event of the scale of Hurricane Dorian – or even a less severe tropical storm. To its credit it engaged and co-operated fully with the response and gradually taking on more and more responsibilities. Successful links were established or maintained with key government services as well. Given its good relationships with key figures in government, however, in the view of the evaluation team (and most people spoken with in country), this could have been better utilised in the overall response given its auxiliary role.

One of the most overlooked issues of this operation was that of human rights. The handling and plight for what was previously reported as perhaps 4,000-5,000 unregistered Haitian migrants (mostly on Abaco) was not given the attention, publicity and advocacy it deserved throughout most of this operation’s response¹. This is believed to have included in some instances a deliberate choice of who would receive support as part of this emergency response. While this was not a specific line of enquiry for this evaluation *per se*, nonetheless, it is an issue that cannot be ignored and requires serious investigation from within the Movement as well as external organisations specialised in this field of enquiry.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

While tracking the evolving path of the hurricane, on 31 August, IFRC deployed a Team Leader from the region to support the BRCS and co-ordinate the initial response. On 2 September 2019, the IFRC issued a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) operation for a total of CHF247,444 to assist some 2,500 people

¹ This is a separate issue from the fact that some Haitian families who had evacuated to New Providence – some of whom were housed in temporary shelters – were provided with relief materials from the BRCS. At the same time, however, some Bahamians were critical of support being provided by the BRCS to these families.

(500 families). Subsequent to this – informed of the scale and nature of destruction and need – the IFRC launched an Emergency Appeal on 3 September 2019 (CHF3.2 million, increasing the DREF loan to CHF500,000), with a subsequent revision on 24 September to CHF17.3 million and a third issued on 7 November 2019 (CHF26.6 million), to assist 2,500 families affected by the hurricane and subsequent flooding. At the time of this Real Time Evaluation taking place, the anticipated end date for this operation was 3 March 2021. Subsequent to this, however, a revised emergency appeal (CHF32 million) was approved in April 2020 to extend this operation till 30 June 2021 in view of unforeseen complications surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic².

The overall strategy of the BRCS and IFRC operation was two-fold, being to:

- meet the immediate needs of affected people; and
- enhance the affected communities' capacity to prepare for and respond to future disasters, while supporting their recovery process.

The operation drew a wide response from across the Movement: through the FACT and RDRT alone, IFRC had fielded a team of 69 people (including the Shelter Sector Cluster Co-ordination Team – SSCT) by the end of 2019 covering many sectors. An additional 56 people were deployed through Emergency Response Units within the same timeframe. These figures, in addition to additional support provided by Partner National Societies and the SSCT, were all channelled through the BRCS.

Overall, The Bahamas relief operation had a good and well-supported start with funds and resources being mobilised quickly and with leadership support from BRCS, the IFRC Country Cluster Support Team (CCST) in Port of Spain (Trinidad), the IFRC Americas Regional Office (ARO) as well as IFRC Headquarters in Geneva. Movement co-ordination with the American Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, and The Bahamas Red Cross provided a platform for sound collaboration and shared leadership. At the same time, however, a weakness observed by the evaluation was that main components of the response were implemented on an individual or organisational basis so there was no possibility for better integration and having one component benefit another.

REAL TIME EVALUATION

This Real time Evaluation (RTE) was commissioned by the IFRC Regional Director for Americas and the Under Secretary General, Programmes and Operations Division in Geneva. This was initiated given the IFRC's commitment to people being assisted in The Bahamas Response. It was intended to provide an independent overview and analysis of the assistance provided to affected communities in Abaco and Grand Bahama, to learn from this for future similar events.

The RTE was expected to ascertain the effect and efficiency of the support provided in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian by evaluating the IFRC Secretariat's operational support to this emergency response, in addition to the operational capacity of the BRCS in its auxiliary role to public authorities and the resource mobilisation and allocation of this operation.

This evaluation was conducted by a team of three people – an external evaluator and team leader (David Stone), the Director-General of a National Society (Grenada Red Cross – Ms Kathy-Ann Morain) and a Senior Officer, Information Management at the IFRC (Mununuri Musori).

A five-person Evaluation Management Team was established to manage and support the RTE, comprising a representative from the ARO, three staff members from the Secretariat and one person from the CCST.

The evaluation was conducted in a highly participatory manner, with interviews held with staff in Geneva, Panama City, Nassau and the CCST. Separate meetings were held with staff from the BRCS as well as selected Partner National Societies, in addition to government representatives, non-governmental

² At the time of finalising this report this appeal had been approved.

organisations and other relevant actors. Meetings were also held with affected people on Abaco, Grand Bahama and New Providence, in addition to volunteers. Direct observations enabled team members to verify some of the reported information. A few topline observations that stood out in this evaluation are given below.

SELECTED LESSONS FOR IFRC

The following are some highlighted lessons the IFRC might choose to consider learning from for future, similar operations.

1. National Society preparedness is crucial – particularly in zones/contexts known to be prone to disasters – and requires more proactive support.
2. While providing crucial services, the Rapid Response/surge process continues to be hampered by administrative delays and, on occasion, failure to deploy the most needed skills/support at the right time.
3. Core competencies such as Protection, Gender and Inclusion, together with Community Engagement and Accountability need to be part of initial immediate emergency programme planning and be sustained throughout the response.
4. Emergency response should match the scale and nature of need: a combination of media attention and high donor response resulted in this operation being imbalanced while at the same time not being able to meet specific needs on time or on budget.
5. In this operation – and with the resources to hand – more support could have been directed towards early recovery, particularly on Abaco and Grand Bahama.
6. Particular consideration needs to be given to situations where several different locations (islands in this case) have been impacted.
7. Deployment of an Operations Manager ahead of Hurricane Dorian making landfall – followed shortly by additional support from the Americas Regional Office – was critical in this instance by supporting the National Society as well as laying groundwork with government agencies and co-ordinating incoming deployments.
8. This operation was overshadowed by the Cash Voucher Assistance activity which surprisingly given the IFRC's track record on this, proved problematic and challenging at many levels. Much of this could possibly have been avoided had there been a reliable and workable intake forms available and through better integration with other sectors/activities.
9. Overall, co-operation between the different actors from within the Movement (including the National Society) was good though this was not repeated between the different sectors on the ground.
10. Good co-ordination was also established between the IFRC-National Society and the ICRC Forensics/Restoring Family Links personnel, though the latter should have been deployed sooner that they were.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following **prioritised recommendations are described in more detail in Section 7**, where additional recommendations are also presented. These statements should be read in the context of emergency response, some of which are likely relevant to future similar events.

1. **Strengthening the capacity of a National Society should be prominent during an emergency response.** This should be a continuous process, building on what may already have been accomplished through National Society Development.
2. **Re-examine earmarking strategies.** A concerted effort is needed to balance restrictive earmarking (which can negatively affect some sectors) by Partner National Societies and other donors, while considering their concerns and interests.

3. **Emergency operations need to feature Protection, Gender and Inclusion, National Society Development and Community Engagement and Accountability from the outset** and ensure they are sustained. While these critical elements were planned for the operation, strict earmarking prevented the mobilisation of resourced necessary to fully operationalise the plan.
4. **The cycle of deployments needs to be a medium-term engagement, from the outset.** Thus, recruitment for long-term delegates and national staff should be planned and processed from the first weeks of the emergency.
5. **Data management systems should be in place as early as possible** to ensure timely, complete and accurate information which is easily accessible for evidence-based decision making.
6. **Cash and Voucher Assistance needs to be approached as an integrated activity.** Roles and responsibilities of all those operating through the ERU need to be clearly articulated and linkages established with other sectors.
7. **Streamline the Emergency Plan of Action process and procedure.** Too much time is required for reporting and reviewing these documents which places a burden on over-stretched teams and detracts from other activities.
8. **Proactive logistics measures are needed in the region,** including Framework Service agreements, pre-stocking selected relief items and up to date knowledge of customs requirements.
9. **Adequate time and resources need to be made available for thorough needs assessments.** This is particularly important in situations where multiple locations (islands) are impacted.
10. **Planning for early recovery needs to start early** in order to benefit from some of the external experience that might be present, streamline activities towards transition and benefit from donor presence and interest at the time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Real Time Evaluation team would like to pay particular thanks to the staff of the Bahamas Red Cross Society for hosting this evaluation, in particular Mrs Terez Curry (President) and Mr Sean Brennen (Director-General). Similar thanks are extended to Walter Cotte (Regional Director) and the staff in the Americas Regional Office, in addition to Ariel Kestens (Head of the English and Dutch Speaking CCST) and colleagues at the CCST in Trinidad and Tobago, whose support was greatly appreciated.

Particular thanks are given to the members of the Evaluation Management Team – Miki Tsukamoto (IFRC Co-ordinator, Monitoring and Evaluation, Geneva) , Jono Anzalone (Head of Disaster and Crisis, Panama Regional Office), Marisa Clarke-Marshall (Resilience Co-ordinator, CCST), Antoine Belair (Senior Officer, Operations Co-ordination, Geneva), and Nelson Castano (Manager, Operations Co-ordination, Geneva). It has been a pleasure working with you all and sincere thanks for the excellent support provided throughout this evaluation.

Special thanks also to the very many people from within the Movement who gave time to speak with the RTE team, in Geneva, Panama City and The Bahamas, in addition to those contacted through Skype or the online survey. On the ground in The Bahamas, our work would not have been possible without the support of Priscila Gonzalez (PMER) who kindly assisted with all of the local and field logistics, in addition to Baylar Talibov (Operations Manager), James Bellamy (Deputy Operations Manager) and all other members of the Operation. In Grand Bahama, we would like to also thank Renaldi Forbes, BRCS Grand Bahama Chairman and Misty Adderly, Operations Officer for their support, while our gratitude is also extended to Carter Stone and Orri Gunnarsson for their valued assistance on Abaco, in addition to Ívar Schram who accompanied the field mission and assisted with meetings.

Sincere thanks are also given to everyone who took time to review earlier drafts of this report in addition to the delegates who supported various earlier parts of the operation and who gave freely of their time to discuss these experiences with the RTE Team.

Finally, we would like to pay particular tribute to all those people met on the ground in The Bahamas – those affected directly and indirectly by Hurricane Dorian – without whose assistance we would not have been able to undertake this assignment. Your words and testimonies have informed this evaluation’s findings and we would like to thank you for openly sharing these with us.

David Stone (Team Leader)
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

On 1 September 2019, Hurricane Dorian hit the northern Bahamas with winds of up to 298km/h, reaching Category 5 on the Saffir-Simpson hurricane wind scale, and gusts of up to 335km/h. This surpassed known meteorological records as the strongest Atlantic hurricane documented to directly impact a land mass since records began. On occasion the Hurricane appeared to be heading for parts of south-eastern USA, but its pathway changed on several occasions (Figure 1).

Hurricane Dorian was classified as a Category Orange situation by the IFRC which, according to its 2019 Regional Contingency Plan for the 2019 Hurricane Season, refers to “an emergency which affects a larger area (or areas) and/or a greater number of beneficiaries [as opposed to a localised event that affected fewer people]. The situation could imply greater international attention or be subject to greater response complexity”. According to this Plan, an initial response in such a situation is expected within “72 hours or the first 15 days after impact”.

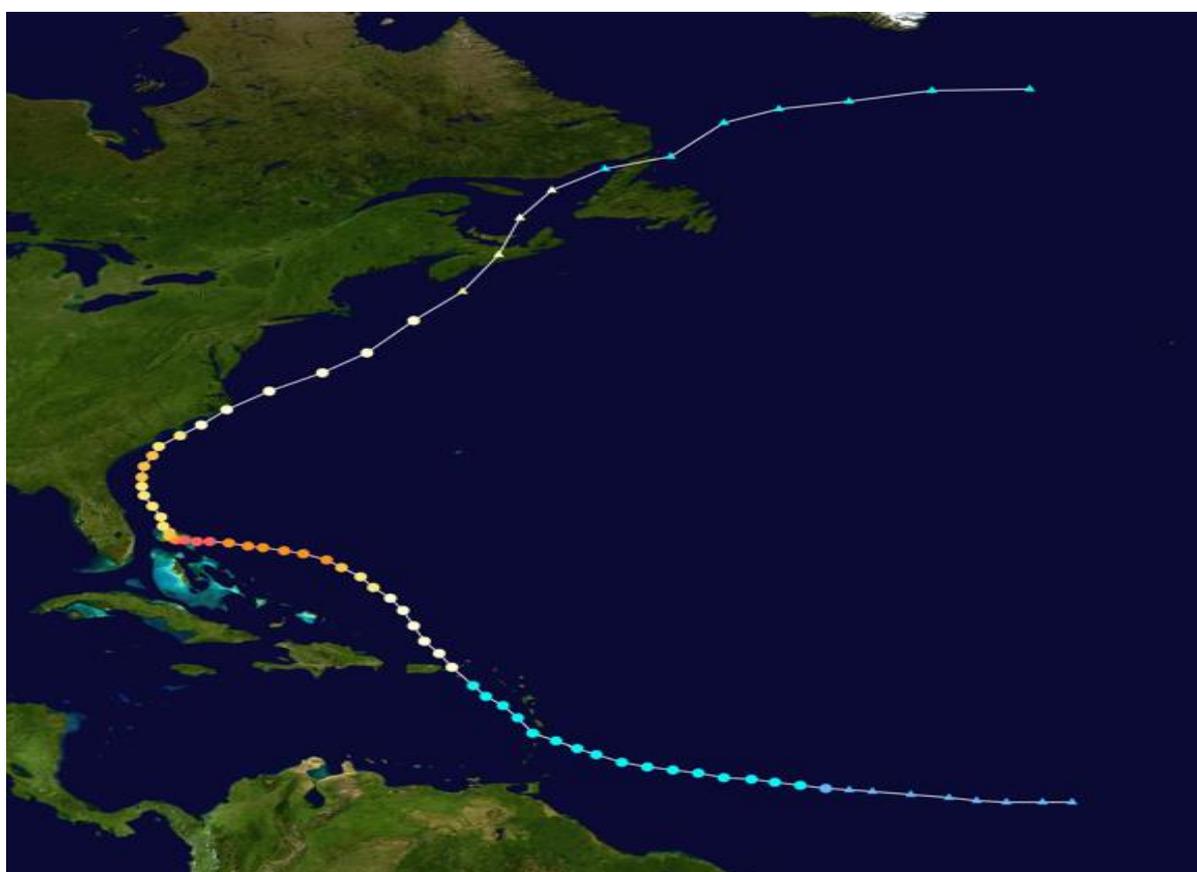


Figure 1. Track of Hurricane Dorian from the Atlantic Ocean to the south-east coast of the USA

Hurricane Dorian was the fourth named storm, second hurricane and first “major hurricane” of the 2019 Atlantic hurricane season. It first started to form on 24 August 2019 from a tropical wave in the Central Atlantic, gradually strengthening as it moved toward the Lesser Antilles and becoming a hurricane on 28 August³. Rapid intensification occurred and, on 31 August, Dorian became a Category 4 hurricane. One day later it reached Category 5 intensity making landfall first in Elbow Cay, The Bahamas and then, several hours later, on Grand Bahama. The ridge of high-pressure steering Dorian

³ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration <https://www.weather.gov/mhx/Dorian2019>

westward collapsed on 2 September, causing Dorian to stall just north of Grand Bahama for about a day.

The storm battered the Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama island for almost two days in what has been described as a “*stationary hurricane*”. The southern eyewall of the hurricane, for example, remained fixed over Grand Bahama for about 30 hours. Other islands in the north-west were affected for a total of 68 hours. Overall, Dorian dropped an estimated 0.9m of rain over the Bahamas. According to the Bahamas Department of Meteorology, the storm surge provoked a tide of 6.1-7.6m, causing loss of lives and assets as well as damage to infrastructure and contamination of soils and well in many coastal zones.

Of all the islands affected, those of the Abaco group suffered the most widespread and greatest levels of devastation. Early assessments showed that thousands of houses had been levelled, telecommunications towers destroyed and water wells and roads damaged. Satellite data and drone imagery taken by the IFRC’s SSCT showed widescale damage in the northern part of the island, from Cooper’s Town to the West Cays and towns in the Marsh Harbour area, including Murphy Town and Spring City. Four informal settlements – The Mudd, Pigeon Pea, Sand Bank and Farm Road, all mostly inhabited by Haitian migrants – suffered severe damage and have since been cleared the Ministry of Public Works and declared no build zones.

In Grand Bahama, the central and eastern parts were the most impacted, with hundreds of homes damaged between Freeport and Deep Water Cay (eastern Grand Bahama). Satellite data suggests that 76 to 100 per cent of buildings analysed near High Rock (central Grand Bahama), and McLeans Town and Deep Water Cay were destroyed. Many houses were also impacted by flooding.

According to one assessment, estimated damage amounts to some US\$2.5 billion, of which nine per cent is public and 91 per cent private⁴. Abaco suffered 87 per cent of the damage and Grand Bahama 13 per cent. Damage to housing was the highest figure (US\$1.5 billion) followed by tourism (US\$529 million). Losses are estimated at US\$717 and were sustained primarily in the private sector: again, 70 per cent of the losses took place on Abaco, 15 per cent on Grand Bahama, and nine per cent on other islands.

Though spared from the brunt of the hurricane, many people moved from Abaco and Grand Bahama to New Providence island, where many – according to people spoken with – were reported to have sought shelter with relatives and friends. Approximately 4,800 evacuees had been registered by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Nassau, with some 1,589 people in shelters and “receiving much-needed assistance”⁵. This, however, differed from figures provided by the Department of Social Services (DOSS), according to which fewer than 800 people initially sought refuge in five official shelters (existing structures) on the island. At the time of this RTE, all but one of these facilities had been deactivated.

⁴ IDB, UN ECLAC and Pan American Health Organisation. 2019. Assessment of the Effects and Impacts of Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EZSHARE-1256154360-486.pdf>

⁵ National Hurricane Centre 10 September 2019. Cited in IFRC Hurricane Dorian Situation Report No. 1.

According to the DOSS, approximately 15,000 people have been affected by this disaster. The latest death count was placed at 74 people (63 on Abaco and 11 on Grand Bahama⁶) though some 282⁷ people remain missing. An estimated 13,000 homes, constituting 45 per cent of the homes on the Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama, suffered severe damage or were completely destroyed.

People affected by the disaster includes Bahamian citizens from Grand Bahama and Abaco and people of Haitian descent residing in Bahamas. While some of the latter segment of the displaced population are regularised and reside under work permits, many were/are present in Bahamas without immigration status, have missing documentation or could be stateless, which made them particularly vulnerable in the aftermath of the Hurricane.

“Even if there are only two people on an island and they need assistance, we should be there.”

IFRC Delegate

1.2 THE BAHAMAS RED CROSS SOCIETY⁸

Founded on 16 November 1939 as a Branch of the British Red Cross, the Bahamas Red Cross Society (BRCS) transitioned to a National Society on 23 June 1975 through an Act passed in The Bahamas House of Parliament. One year later, on 16 December, it was formally recognised by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as its 123rd member.

Prior to Dorian, the main programmes carried out by the BRCS centred around social welfare, primarily providing Meals on Wheels, a School Milk Programme, Red Cross Youth, After School Mentoring Programme, Assistance to Refugees, First Aid/CPR Training, First Aid Service, Disaster and Emergency Relief Assistance and Family Island⁹ Service.

The headquarters of the National Society is located in the capital city, Nassau, on the island of New Providence. Prior to Hurricane Dorian, it had two branches, one each on Grand Bahama and Abaco: the former suffered some structural damage as a result of the disaster while the latter was completely destroyed. At this time, BRCS also had a presence on 10 family islands through 12 member groups.

Prior to Hurricane Dorian, BRCS’s focus was on social programmes supported through its HQ and branches. At the time, its annual operating budget was in the order of US\$600,000-650,000. Much of its fundraising was formerly done through its Red Cross Fair and Red Cross Ball.

The National Society last had a General Assembly meeting in June 2019 at which the Acting President was confirmed President. Several new board members were elected as part of this meeting, meaning that the National Society had a new board. A new Director-General was appointed early December 2019 and effectively took up his position on 1 February 2020. These institutional changes needed to be kept in mind when conducting this RTE.

The National Society was about to commence its next strategic planning process (i.e., beyond 2020) to enhance its timely and effective response capacity at the time when Hurricane Dorian struck. This process is now part of this National Society Development Plan of Action. An Organisational Capacity

⁶ NEMA. 28 February 2020. As cited in the IFRC Situation Report No. 12, 29 February 2020.

⁷ As of 1 October 2020, according to NEMA. Both the number of dead and missing, however, are widely believed to be much higher than these figures, given the fact that many unregistered Haitians are thought to have remained at home in their makeshift shelters during the storm/surge, while many others have fled to other locations to avoid being identified and possibly deported.

⁸ This section draws on the National Society Plan of Action (draft) October 2019 to March 2021.

⁹ “Family Islands” or “Out Islands” refers to all islands in The Bahamas archipelago, with the exception of New Providence and Grand Bahamas islands – some 700 in total.

Assessment and Certification (OCAC) self-assessment exercise (OCAC Phase I) was conducted by BRCS in January 2019. Several themes that constituted key priorities for the development of the capacities of the National Society were identified including volunteer management, branch development, resource mobilisation and PMER. A Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process had been planned before the disaster within the OFDA funded project “Capacity Building Initiative for Disaster Preparedness and Response in Caribbean Red Cross National Societies”.

Ongoing staff changes did not help the National Society at the time of Hurricane Dorian. To its credit, however, despite these challenges the BRCS actively engaged with government, private sector, businesses and the media, in addition to the various members from the Movement, doing its best to keep abreast with co-ordination and ongoing activities to which it might have been able to contribute. This in addition to continuing its traditional social welfare support.

1.3 THE RESPONSE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

On 24 August 2019, the National Hurricane Centre and Central Pacific Hurricane Centre from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced that a newly formed tropical depression had strengthened into Tropical Storm Dorian. Three days later, on 27 August, the IFRC issued its first Information Bulletin as it started to track the progress of Dorian and present initial proposed Red Cross actions.

On 31 August, the IFRC’s Regional Disaster Management Co-ordinator arrived in Nassau to provide support to the National Society, the BRCS and co-ordinate initial response. The following day, as the hurricane moved towards the north-west of the Bahamas, the IFRC issued its second information bulletin, monitoring the development of Dorian. On 2 September, the IFRC issued a Disasters Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) operation (MDRBS003) for a total of CHF247,444 to assist some 2,500 people (500 families).

Informed of the scale and nature of destruction and need, and at the request of the National Society, the IFRC launched its Emergency Appeal for The Bahamas Response on 3 September (CHF3.2 million) with a subsequent revision on 24 September to CHF17.3 million and a third revision issued on 7 November (CHF26.6 million), to assist 2,500 families affected by the hurricane and subsequent flooding. Subsequent to this, however, a revised emergency appeal (CHF32 million) was approved in April 2020 to extend this operation till 30 June 2021 in view of unforeseen complications surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

The overall strategy of the BRCS and IFRC operation was two-fold, being to:

- meet the immediate needs of affected people; and
- enhance the affected communities’ capacity to prepare for and respond to future disasters, while supporting their recovery process.

This strategy was based on two phases, which were expected to overlap to some extent: an emergency relief¹⁰ phase and the recovery phase¹¹. A rapid transition was expected to take place between both phases.

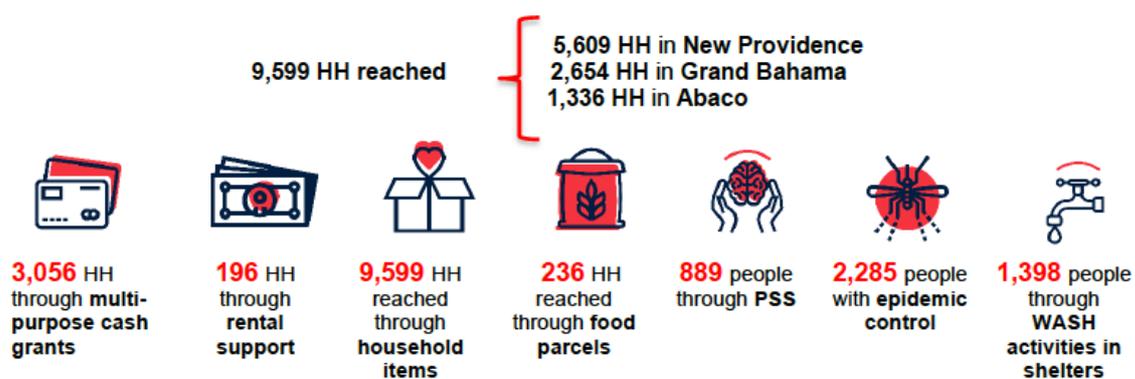
¹⁰ Final relief items were distributed mid- to late December 2019.

¹¹ The Government of the Bahamas, with the support of UNDP, has developed and published 11 recovery projects and organised a Pledging Conference on 13 January 2020. A total of US\$1.5 billion in financing and in-kind services was pledged for The Bahamas hurricane recovery. Part of this, however, is in the form of loans to government. Source: IFRC Emergency Plan of Action Revision 3 (draft).

Through the Surge Response system, and with support from the Red Cross Movement, IFRC fielded an evolving team of people covering the following areas: financial assistance (Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), Shelter, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health, Livelihoods, Basecamp Management, Communications, Administration, Finance, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER), Information Management (IM), Information Technology and Telecommunications (ITT), Logistics, National Society Development (NSD), PER and, through the ICRC, Restoring Family Links and Forensics. At the time of this evaluation, the operation was still in the process of transitioning from Surge support into longer term delegates.

As of end-February 2020¹², the BRCS through the appeal and other local contributions, had reached approximately 9,600 households – 5,609 in New Providence, 2,654 in Grand Bahama and 1,366 in Abaco, reaching an estimated 32,637 people. Specific items/activities are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Distribution activities as of end-February 2020



The most frequently distributed items were food parcels, water and hygiene kits, some 6,500 in total, followed by buckets – almost 4,700.

Prior to this Real Time Evaluation (RTE) taking place, the IFRC had deployed a recovery assessment team in September 2019 (deployment orders were given on the 17th and 23rd September) to develop the recovery strategy and to identify the next steps to be taken during this stage. This assessment – together with preliminary findings from this RTE – helped inform a comprehensive (third) revision of the Emergency Appeal and Plan of Action which was approved in April 2020.

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This RTE was commissioned by the IFRC Regional Director for Americas and the USG, Programmes and Operations Division in Geneva. This was initiated given the IFRC’s commitment to people being assisted in The Bahamas Response. It was intended to provide an independent overview and analysis of the assistance provided to affected communities in Abaco and Grand Bahama, to learn from this for future similar events.

The RTE was expected to ascertain the effect and efficiency of the support provided in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian by evaluating the IFRC Secretariat’s operational support to this emergency response, in addition to the operational capacity of the BRCS in its auxiliary role to public authorities and the resource mobilisation and allocation of this operation.

¹² IFRC Revised Emergency Appeal 22 April 2020. Note that some people/households may have received more than one form of assistance.

The RTE draws on current best practices in the three areas mentioned above (what is working well) and identifies where improvements might be required, taking into consideration the context and capacities of the IFRC and its member National Societies, the BRCS and other Movement partners. It was anticipated that this RTE would identify challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt for the Red Cross to operate and respond to disasters in the context of small island/middle-income states where there is minimal presence of other humanitarian actors.

Background consultations were anticipated to be held at the IFRC Secretariat, Geneva, in addition to the Americas Regional Office in Panama City. In the Bahamas, the RTE was to focus on selected sites in both Abaco and Grand Bahama (with anticipated field visits to both) as well as the capital, Nassau, where the BRCS Head Office and IFRC operational headquarters are both located. Consultations were also anticipated with people who may/not have received assistance, BRCS volunteers, Rapid Response/staff deployments from the early stages of this emergency, and other in-country agencies who are contributing to this operation.

In terms of scope – aside from the geographical considerations mentioned above – the RTE was requested to pay particular attention to the following:

- **Preparedness and Readiness** at the national level;
- **International readiness**, including Surge deployments;
- **Secretariat Co-ordination** – operational leadership and support provided;
- **Movement Co-ordination**;
- **Resource allocation and mobilisation**, both the timing and content of resources provided, including Human Resources, Logistics and Procurement (local and regional) and Finance (including Appeal co-ordination);
- **External Co-ordination** – to include government services, links with cash distribution servers and other agencies; and
- **Volunteering**.

3. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

3.1 OVERVIEW

This evaluation was conducted by a team of three people – an external evaluator and team leader (David Stone), the Director-General of a National Society (Grenada Red Cross – Ms Kathy-Ann Morain) and a Senior Officer, Information Management at the IFRC (Mununuri Musori). Brief biographies for each team member are presented in Annex IV.

A five-person IFRC Secretariat Evaluation Management Team (EMT) was established to manage and support the RTE, comprising a representative from the Country Cluster Support Team (CCST) in Port of Spain (Trinidad), a representative from the Americas Regional Office (ARO) in Panama City and three staff members from Geneva (Operations and PMER). In addition to supporting the RTE Team with meeting arrangements and logistics, the EMT was also responsible for supporting and overseeing the evaluation process up to the finalisation of the final evaluation report.

3.2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The following approaches were adopted to conduct this RTE:

- an initial review and analysis of secondary data provided by the EMT and acquired directly by the evaluation team, which included Emergency Appeals, Situation Reports, Field Assessments and Plans and programme documents, amongst others. This was an active and ongoing process throughout the evaluation;

- key informant interviews (KIIs) with selected staff at the IFRC Geneva, ARO, CCTS and BRCS;
- KIIs with the embedded ICRC delegates deployed for Restoring Family Links and Forensics;
- KIIs with selected representatives from Partner National Societies (PNSs) who have played an active supporting role on the ground in The Bahamas;
- KIIs with key government counterpart staff and other relevant stakeholders;
- KIIs with external stakeholders in country and for some delegates who were previously engaged with the operation;
- meetings and focus group discussions (FGDs) with BRCS volunteers;
- FGDs and KIIs with some of the affected communities and households on Abaco, Grand Bahama and New Providence who had (or had not) received support through this response; and
- Direct observations on the ground in Abaco, Grand Bahama and Nassau.

A series of questionnaires (Annex V, VI and VII) were developed to guide discussions with the above-mentioned audiences and to help ensure consistency in approaches and lines of questioning by different members of the Evaluation Team.

An online survey questionnaire (Annex VII) was also prepared and sent to individuals who were involved in the initial emergency response. This was intended to allow people deployed as part of surge system – Field Assessment Co-ordination Team (FACT), Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT), SSCT and ERUs – to provide meaningful inputs to this RTE.

In addition to presenting its findings against the main proposed titles of the final report – Preparedness and Readiness, Secretariat Co-ordination, Movement Co-ordination, Resource Mobilisation and External Co-ordination (based on questions contained in Annex V) – the evaluation also analysed some of its findings in line with selected OECD-DAC¹³ criteria, particularly Relevance, Effectiveness, Coverage, Co-ordination and Connectedness.

Separate debriefing/validation meetings were held by the Evaluation Team prior to departing from Geneva, Panama City and Nassau to allow a further exchange of information and provide an occasion to validate certain points. An online presentation is also scheduled to take place by the RTE team on 26 May, as part of the Virtual Red Cross Pre-Hurricane Conference 2020.

3.3 ETHICAL STANDARDS

All reasonable steps were taken by the RTE Team to ensure that the RTE was designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of those people and communities involved in this response and to ensure that the evaluation was technically accurate and reliable. In addition, the Team strived to ensure that the RTE was conducted in a transparent and impartial manner to contribute to organisational learning and accountability. In this respect, the Evaluation Team adhered to the evaluation standards and applicable practices outlined in the IFRC Evaluation Policy and Standards, respecting the following:

1. **Utility:** Evaluations must be useful and used.

¹³ First defined in 1991, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability) have come to serve as the core reference for evaluating international development and humanitarian projects, programmes and policies. In 2019, following an extensive review by the OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, a sixth criterion – Coherence – was added.

2. **Feasibility:** Evaluations must be realistic, diplomatic, and managed in a sensible, cost-effective manner.
3. **Ethics and Legality:** Evaluations must be conducted in an ethical and legal manner, with particular regard for the welfare of those involved in and affected by the evaluation.
4. **Impartiality and Independence;** Evaluations should be impartial, providing a comprehensive and unbiased assessment that takes into account the views of all stakeholders.
5. **Transparency:** Evaluation activities should reflect an attitude of openness and transparency.
6. **Accuracy:** Evaluations should be technical accurate, providing sufficient information about the data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods so that its worth or merit can be determined.
7. **Participation:** Stakeholders should be consulted and meaningfully involved in the evaluation process when feasible and appropriate.
8. **Collaboration:** Collaboration between key operating partners in the evaluation process improves the legitimacy and utility of the evaluation.

Respect was also ensured concerning the seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, namely, Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality.

3.4 LIMITATIONS

This report is intended to provide an overview of the entire operation, which covered a period of almost six months. In providing this “snapshot” it was not possible to interrogate and report on every individual deployment or sector in detail but rather to examine from a critical perspective how the collective operation, involving many parts of the Movement and a large number of individual actors, responded to the needs of affected people and communities in The Bahamas.

One of the main limitations associated with this RTE was the short time available to discuss the recovery and transition with more people on the ground – those who had received some form of assistance as well as those who had not. To maximise coverage two members of the RTE team went to Grand Bahama for 1-1.5 days, while the third paid a quick 1.5 day visit to Abaco. Both occasions were judged to have been of utmost importance as they provided an opportunity to check certain facts raised in preceding meetings in Geneva, Panama City as well as Nassau, conduct personal interviews – including with some volunteers and other actors on the ground – and observe the scale of disaster and ongoing recovery programme at first hand.

“Dorian was a horrible storm, but it has brought very good perspectives to the situation.”

BRCs Staff Member

The RTE did not examine fine details of all sectoral interventions – though it touched on most – nor attempt to make an evidence-based judgement on overall impact. Bilateral activities of PNSs in response to Hurricane Dorian were not a specific requirement of the RTE unless this was part of the overall co-ordination. Likewise, the RTE did not evaluate the performance of the ICRC in its specific role in this instance. Representatives from the ICRC and selected PNSs were, however, interviewed by team members.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 PREPAREDNESS AND READINESS

According to the IFRC's Regional Contingency Plan for the 2019 Hurricane Season, in the 10 years prior to Hurricane Dorian, the Movement had had 28 operations in 15 countries in the region, 10 of which were on Caribbean islands, including one in The Bahamas. From details provided in the linked Institutional Preparedness Dashboard – which is a mapping of some preparedness aspects, but not the systems/mechanisms behind these to permit timely and effective response – The Bahamas would appear to have been well prepared for a disaster having reportedly completed/conducted the following:

- Response Plan;
- Contingency Plan (though proof was not provided);
- Simulation;
- Operational Manual (proof was not provided);
- Emergency Operations Centre (EOC – though proof was not provided);
- 25 National Intervention Teams;
- 2 Regional Intervention Teams;
- 50 Damage and Needs Assessments;
- Fund collection;
- Emergency fund;
- Prepositioning for 100 families;
- Inventory; and
- Facilities for Humanitarian Assistance Entry.

According to the Preparedness for Response document, the regional Humanitarian Hub was supposed to have stock in transit prepositioned at the National Society in The Bahamas. This was confirmed to have arrived in country on 2 August 2019. Some supplies were already sent to Abaco and Grand Bahama but these were lost or destroyed in the hurricane.

Reviewing the above, the only missing item on the dashboard at the time when the hurricane made landfall was the Red Cross Law – a national law that recognises the Red Cross Movement's role in the national disaster management system. On paper, therefore, The Bahamas was therefore ranked at 90 per cent preparedness, sandwiched in between Canada (80 per cent) and the USA (100 per cent). The Bahamas was seemingly the most prepared island in the Caribbean – the closest being Dominica (70 per cent).

Hurricane Dorian happened as The Bahamas was still struggling to overcome the devastating effects of three earlier hurricanes:

- in 2017, Hurricane Irma, a Category 5 storm, virtually levelled Ragged Island, leaving it inhabitable nearly two years after the storm;
- in 2016, Hurricane Matthew, a Category 4 storm, tore through Grand Bahama, leaving 95 per cent of the buildings in Eight Mile Rock and Holmes Rock – situated at the western part of the island – severely damaged; and
- in 2015, Hurricane Joaquin, an equally strong storm, ravaged the southern islands, including Long Island.

In 2016, in response to the arrival of Hurricane Matthew, the Bahamas Red Cross deployed their staff trained in disaster response and volunteers to support the Social Public Services in handling evacuations and shelter management on the island of New Providence¹⁴.

Given such recent history, it was surprising to find so little preparedness at government or institutional levels for other, similar, types of events. It was clear, for example, that the National Society was not well prepared in advance for an eventual disaster such as Hurricane Dorian – it had done little to augment its portfolio of activities even though it had been actively engaged in previous similar events. This observation was confirmed by a Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) surge delegate deployed as part of the recovery assessment team to conduct a review of National Society preparedness and readiness. Findings from this review indicated that many of the key components of a National Society preparedness and response mechanism (response and contingency plans, operations manual, emergency operational procedures and a functioning EOC) were not evident in this response.

Prior to Dorian, some preventive and remedial measures were taken, including:

- BRCS's work with NEMA and the DOSS to identify possible communal shelters in case of an emergency;
- community engagement activities to sensitize some vulnerable communities to be prepared for the hurricane season, which included the distribution of hurricane kits;
- prepositioning of some supplies on islands with local Red Cross Member Groups;
- training for some volunteers by the Disaster Management Committee;

The BRCS had had previous experience of responding to Category 4 and Category 5 storms, though the many signature aspects of Hurricane Dorian made this disaster stand out from others. What was seen as the main gap in this instance was the National Society's lack of preparedness for the scale of the response operation following Hurricane Dorian, particularly in terms of its capacity to act in a coherent and co-ordinated manner. Key challenges faced at the time included:

- dealing with a crisis of unparalleled magnitude;
- a National Society undergoing staffing and organisational transitions, some of which were in direct response to the emergency/response;
- responding to needs and requests from many different parts of the Movement;
- damaged Branch structures on both Abaco and Grand Bahama;
- a weak base of registered and trained volunteers, some of whom moved to New Providence ahead of the hurricane;
- managing the volume of spontaneous volunteers – national and international;
- responding to people coming to the office/warehouse to provide relief items;
- responding to those who came to the office for relief assistance;
- coping with a constantly growing number of external technical advisors;
- communications with people affected by the hurricane on Abaco and Grand Bahama;
- participating in early registrations for relief assistance; and
- financial management and ensuring accountability for the considerable flow of incoming funds given that all transactions from the IFRC and some Bilateral activities had to pass through the National Society.

No risks assessment had been done prior to this emergency though some were clearly identified shortly thereafter, in particular financial management, staff and volunteer management and logistics. There was also a risk in terms of how undocumented migrants would be identified and supported as

¹⁴ <https://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/americas/bahamas/bahamas-red-cross-activates-its-disaster-team-and-volunteers-before-the-arrival-of-hurricane-matthew-72579/>

part of this response – given the government’s position on this issue. This, in addition to the issue of how people were identified to receive emergency relief items or cash grants, needed to be paramount in the Federation’s application of Humanity, Neutrality and Impartiality, amongst its other Principles.

The operation following Hurricane Dorian put enormous pressure on BRCS’ limited capacity in disaster response and volunteer management. Systems and procedures were lacking to facilitate financial transactions of the scale required to kick start this operation in the manner planned. Most existing human resources lacked the expertise or training required to be able to plug into the evolving operation, even with guidance from an external Operations Manager.

“People wanted to buy books, rucksacks and pencils so their children could go back to schools.”
 Implementing Agency, Abaco Island

At the time of this RTE, programmes were being implemented by some 130 registered volunteers¹⁵ and 16 staff. Twenty volunteers – employed by the Ministry of Health and seconded to the National Society – have been trained in PSS. Technical and administrative support staff were also present, on secondment from different parts of the Movement.

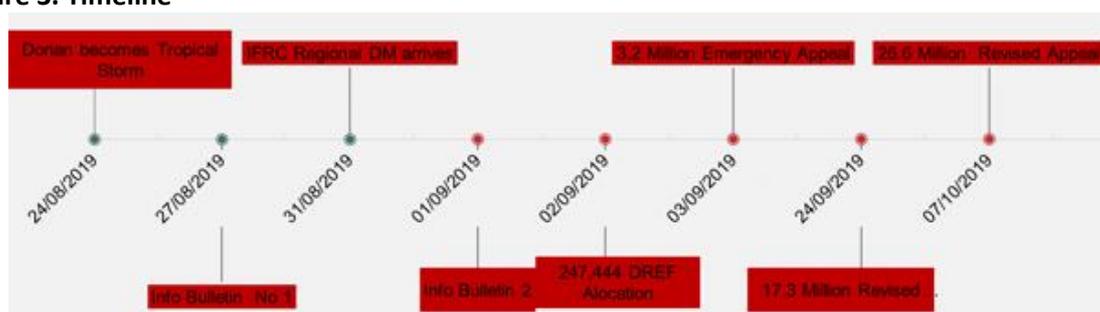
While the scale of the operation was clearly far greater than anything the National Society had previously experienced, to its credit it did not yield to the considerable pressure of highly experienced and very influential parts of the Movement. Instead, little by little, it became clear that the Dorian response operation could be a golden opportunity for the National Society to enhance its capacity (human resources as well as programme scope) as well as for much needed organisational change. The IFRC and Partner National Societies have been at the forefront of supporting the BRCS with the deployment of National Society PER surge capacity and plans for a long-term bilateral Canadian Red Cross delegate to continue providing similar support.

4.2. THE OPERATION

4.2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONSE

The Government of The Bahamas led the overall response through NEMA and in co-ordination with and supported from the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the latter being itself reinforced by staff from World Food Programme, OCHA and the Pan-American Health Organisation. In this instance, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee was not officially activated. To align response functions, NEMA activated its Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) humanitarian co-ordination structure, comprising a total of 15 functions. The BRCS and IFRC participated in overall ESF co-ordination as well as sectoral meetings, while the SSCT was the government’s international counterpart for ESF6, Mass Care and Shelter Service.

Figure 3. Timeline



¹⁵ Different figures have been reported to Geneva and the ARO by BRCS.

IFRC’s operation witnessed a rapid and comprehensive response in terms of financial support and human resources: through the surge response system and with the support of the Red Cross Movement a 69-person field team was present in The Bahamas by 26 September, covering the areas of Shelter, WASH, Health, Livelihoods, Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), Restoring Family Links, Basecamp Management, Communications, Administration, Finance, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER), Information Management and Logistics¹⁶. At this stage, 1,307 households had been reached with assistance and cash was distributed to 99 households on 27 September.

While some initial assessments were conducted by volunteers, the first field assessment was conducted in East Grand Bahama from 15-21 September 2019. This combined with other fieldwork that included the distribution of WASH items (hygiene kits, jerry cans, buckets and mosquito nets), WASH sector co-ordination and volunteer identification and engagement – four people were recruited. Priority concerns identified included contaminated water supplies (with salt water and other substances/materials) and damage to sanitation facilities – individual households and institutions such as schools and community centres.

Table 1. Key Points – Voices of Disaster Affected People

SECTOR	KEY POINTS
PGI	Evidence of xenophobia in the Bahamian population towards the Haitian community
Migration	Haitian community are very concerned about increased immigration activity, affecting their day to day life. Activities that require interaction with authorities are disrupted.
Shelter	Lack of information on government plans and have started rebuilding anyway. Most people are reporting difficult living conditions and wish to return to their original home/island.
Health	Bahamians report having access to health services, undocumented have been accessing field hospital maintained by Samaritan’s Purse.
Education	Mixed reports of people helped by Social Services to school their children and people (both documented and undocumented) struggling to put their children in school.
Livelihoods	Most people lost their livelihoods but have some basic coping mechanisms to get them through their basic needs.
CEA	General lack of information on government and NGO activities and lots of rumours. Information received by word of mouth. Need for regular feedback to communities on plans. Face to face interactions, WhatsApp and phone calls are preferred communication channels. Shelter and children PSS support are priority sectors of interest.
WASH	Basic water needs are relatively well covered, population happy for now
PSS	Most people are stressed and disheartened. Most people have lost family, are struggling with the situation but there is a stigma about receiving PSS support. Children talk about having seen bodies (in Abaco).
RFL	Lack of clarity from government on how to report missing persons and on the identification process. Funeral expenses are high and people are concerned about how to pay for this.

Source: Hurricane Dorian Early Recovery Assessment and Plan. 30 November 2019,

¹⁶ IFRC The Bahamas Hurricane Dorian Situation Report No. 1.

Starting in October, the BRCS together with other Movement partners initiated an Early Recovery Assessment to identify next steps to transitioning the operation from response/relief to early recovery. Contrary to previous similar assessments conducted in other operations, it was agreed that this would comprise of an integrated cell that applied exiting and incoming knowledge and assessments from all other sectors. From feedback received through consultations, a number of key points were recorded (Table 1).

4.2.2 RAPID RESPONSE/SURGE DEPLOYMENTS

A total of 69 people were deployed through the surge mechanism, termed the Rapid Response Programme, as part of the FACT and RDRT/RIT systems, including the Shelter Cluster Co-ordination Team. Additional deployments were made through the ERU system, as used by several PNSs. The earliest deployment was the initial Team Leader who deployed on 31 August 2019 for a period of 20 days, when a replacement arrived (19 September 2019). Thirteen additional people were deployed from 5-6 September, while a further 21 followed at later dates the same month. Table 2 provides an overview of the offices/National Societies who responded through surge, in addition to the areas of specialisation provided. Forty-six people were contracted directly through their National Society, while seven were engaged through the RDRT arrangements. Others were mainly IFRC staff.

Twenty-two National Societies responded to this operation, the main areas of intervention being: Co-ordination (8), Support Services (8), Cash (6), IM (6), Health/PSS (6), SSCT (6), Communications (3), Shelter (3), WASH (3), CEA (2), Forensics (2) and “Other” (26).

With IFRC’s new surge optimisation – in addition to reducing the carbon footprint – there has been a call for “as local as possible and as global as necessary”, though the actual surge deployments did not reflect this, with just four people coming from the Caribbean itself. This suggests a need for broader sub-regional representation in the FACT/RDRT roster, in addition to addressing language requirements (Creole or French, for the Haitian community) in the immediate response.

The American and Canadian Red Cross both provided on the ground support daily with logistics, fleet management, administration, Human Resources and technical support that was otherwise not deployed or available within the IFRC operation. The American and Canadian Red Cross both fielded delegations in support to the BRCS, with some 18 disaster relief specialists deployed (over 4-5 months) by the former and a rotation of three Field Representatives from the Canadian Red Cross in support of Case Management, Construction and Preparedness. The bilateral presence by the American and Canadian Red Cross societies complemented the work being done through the multilateral programme and provided a platform for effective shared leadership. Co-ordination among the movement partners present was complementary.

Emergency Response Units (ERUs) were established for Basecamp, Logistics and Relief. The American Cross Relief ERU offered to extend their deployment to also cover the CVA component, which the IFRC Team Leader accept. Under this scheme delegates were deployed mainly from the American Red Cross (about 60 per cent), Canadian Red Cross, British Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross. The experience and technical competency across this group of people was, reportedly, very unbalanced: some had a strong international operations background but no CVA experience while others had CVA expertise but no international experience. Some delegates had none of the above, while a few covered all required competencies. Great majority if not all, had no ERU training. Some of the group had not received ERU training while others had limited Red Cross experience. The diverse levels of competencies inevitably produced complications with the subsequent distribution of cash.

Table 2. FACT and RDRT/RIT deployments (excluding ERU personnel)

DEPLOYING NATIONAL SOCIETY/OFFICE	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	POSITIONS COVERED
IFRC Staff	16	Team Leader; PMER (3); Health Co-ordinator; Finance; Logistics; HR (2); Livelihoods; NSD (from the ARO), Finance (2 from CCST); Fleet Officer and Data Visualisation, Finance (2)
ICRC	4	RFL Team Leader; RFL Data Management Expert; IM and a Forensic Specialist
Australia	3	PGI (2) and Recovery Co-ordinator
Belgium	1	IM Co-ordinator
Canada	9	WASH Co-ordinator; Administration; Medical Health (2); PER; Infrastructure; Liaison; Deputy Team Leader and Field Co-ordinator
Denmark	3	Communications; PMER; CEA and Cash and Voucher
Ecuador	1	Shelter
Finland	3	Team Leader; Procurement and Field Co-ordinator
France	2	An initial deployment as part of the Relief ERU, but then extended to continue as Field Co-ordinator
Germany	1	Shelter Co-ordinator
Guyana	1	Public Health
Iceland	2	WASH and CEA
Kenya	1	CEA
Jamaica	2	PSS and Disaster Preparedness Specialist
Spain	2	Livelihoods and Information Analyst
St Vincent and Grenadine	1	Administration
Suriname	1	WASH Co-ordinator
Sweden	2	Team Leader and IM-IT
Switzerland	2	CBI and Shelter
The Netherlands	1	IM Co-ordinator
United Kingdom	6	Logistics Co-ordinator; Hydrogeologist; PDC; PHIE; DRR and Livelihoods
United States of America	8	Communications; Field Co-ordinator; Liaison Advisor; CBI (4) and IM Co-ordinator;
Consultants	3	Shelter Cluster Co-ordination

“People didn’t want to be reached by anyone because of fear of deportation.”

Member of a Haitian community, Abaco Island

Not having some of the right personnel in the field created problems which were compounded by the number of rotations that happened without proper handover (see also Section 4.5.2 Human Resources). The impact of mistakes made is still felt five months into the operation. Surge staff rotations for the ERU were in many cases done without an adequate handover process between the outgoing and incoming staff – an opportunity to brief/debrief and explain why certain decisions had been taken at the time. While it is acknowledged that it is “great to get people out there to gain

experience”, in this instance it did not work well. Future situations should pay more attention to required competencies rather than peoples’ ability to quickly deploy.

Another challenge for the Regional office was that the Cash/Relief ERU had direct communication with IFRC Geneva and the American Red Cross’ headquarters in Washington, D.C. but not with the IFRC Regional Office in Panama. The American Red Cross offered a liaison person for the ERU based in Washington, D.C. to ensure adequate support for the deployed team. While this was a positive strategic decision it also meant that the Regional office was only providing support on specific issues raised through the liaison person which might result in delays for resolution of problems. This extra layer meant that the ERU was getting technical support from Washington, D.C. instead of channelling any issues immediately to the IFRC Regional Office. The liaison person would then relay the issues to Panama for resolution. This was all necessitated by the fact that American Red Cross as the single largest donor to this operation wanted to be more engaged to provide adequate guidance and oversight under the auspices of Red Cross shared leadership concept

It is important for the teams in the Regional and Country Custer Support offices to be aware of the Surge and ERU Standard Operations Procedures (SOPS) so that they can proactively identify gaps and challenges and pinpoint the best possible person or entity to resolve challenges with rotations. One fundamental difference in the way ERU and Surge (FACT/RDRT/RIT) rotations are done is that ERU rotations are not coordinated with GVA or the Regional office but between the deploying NS and the Team Leader while for FACT rotations, the Team leader works with The Regional office and /or Geneva.

4.3 MOVEMENT CO-ORDINATION AND FUNDED PARTNERS

Overall, this operation has been well very co-ordinated between Movement partners. Good working relations were reported at the country level between all principle actors – BRCS, the American Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, the ICRC and the IFRC. Initial co-ordination meetings were led by the international partners, but the BRCS has now taken charge of calling for and chairing co-ordination meetings on a weekly basis. While there is no formal Movement co-ordination agreement, the process has been fit for purpose. Bilateral deployments were complementary and thus enhanced operational capacity through structured collaboration and co-ordination. Bilateral deployments have usually been a significant challenge in other emergency response operations as they are duplicative and not complimentary, thus this has been a significant achievement for this operation.

“The cohesiveness of the IFRC team here has been impressive.”

BRCS Staff Member

The American Red Cross brought to the table not only significant financial support (close to 75 per cent at the time of the report) and technical experts (ERU and Surge staff) but also their own partnerships from the USA. The American Red Cross provided funding to three non-governmental organisations in addition to its contributions to the Red Cross Movement, namely World Central Kitchen, CORE and Mercy Corps. This reportedly followed discussions with both IFRC and the BRCS in an attempt to engage the Movement with external partners who filled gaps in technical expertise to help meet needs and, in addition, build local capacity.

At the time of this RTE, World Central Kitchen was operating out of the existing BRCS kitchen workspace. The organisation is working with BRCS staff and intends to renovate and expand the kitchen in addition to building the capacity of staff and volunteers to reach more people through more efficient preparation of meals using a modern kitchen. The renovation process will increase meal capacity to an estimated 10,000 people per day. The National Society – at the time of the evaluation – was managing to feed around 150 people a day with its meal programme.

In collaboration with IFRC, CORE was being funded to implement a home repairs programme (300 houses) in Abaco, while IFRC is working with BRCS on home repairs on Grand Bahama. The latter is testing a “owner driven approach” as well as a potential partnership with the St Bernard’s’ Project (SBP) to make small repairs. There is an ongoing pilot with SBP for the repair of houses for 6-10 households.

Mercy Corp a US NGO with specialist skills in economic recovery and WatSan was being funded to support approximately 70 small businesses¹⁷ on economic recovery in addition to WASH activities. It was also providing online business training and mentor training, available not only to the aid recipients they work with but to anyone in Grand Bahama.

4.4 OPERATIONAL CO-ORDINATION

As stipulated in the Statutory Law of The Bahamas, the Bahamas Red Cross Society shall be the sole national Red Cross society in the country¹⁸.

Emergency operations in the Americas region are governed by the IFRC Americas SOP which is largely aligned with the IFRC global Emergency Response Framework. The Americas region SOP states that that an operation is be supported from the Regional Office for the first 3-6 months before being handed over to the country or cluster office. Thus, at the time of this RTE, technical support was being provided through the Regional Office in Panama and not the CCST. The operation has forged what appears to have been very good working relationships with the ARO: moving to a new reporting line with the CCST could present its own challenges. The CSST was, however, fortunately involved with the operation from the beginning with the deployment of the Head of the CSST to support strategic leadership and National Society strengthening.

Certain key informants felt that the Americas Region SOPs – as they stand – do not explicitly state the role of the CSST during the time that the Regional Office manages the operation, or to what extent the CSST should be involved in operational and strategic decision-making. This modality has seemingly worked well for the Region for a long time but there was a question from one key informant as to how aligned these SOPs are to the global Emergency Response Framework.

One of the aspects on the handover process was ensuring that sufficient human resources were in the operation so as to not constrain the CCST. In this regard, the ARO and Operation’s Team managed to open most of the long-term positions early. However, with the exception of the positions of the Operations Manager and Deputy Operations Manager, recruitment and getting candidates on board still took considerable time. Having the positions filled in the first three months would have meant that no greater burden would be placed on the CCST and, as a result, early transition would be possible. Issues around grading and salary scale of some delegates seemed to be the limiting factors for long-term recruitment.

Movement co-ordination has worked well, aided perhaps by having all partners and the majority of technical and administrative support personnel in the same room/building complex in Nassau at the beginning of the operation. Bi-weekly meetings were held with the National Society to share updates, experiences and challenges. Weekly Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners meetings were also held as well as weekly co-ordination meetings with Abaco and Grand Bahamas branches.

¹⁷ The RTE has since been informed of the intention to increase this to 230 small businesses. The agreement was expected to be signed early April 2020.

¹⁸ http://laws.bahamas.gov.bs/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1975/1975-0013/TheBahamasRedCrossSocietyAct_1.pdf

At the same time, however, an issue raised by many key informants was that it was unnecessary and unproductive to have the bulk of the response staff sitting in Nassau which as this meant that people were not responding to the actual needs on the ground in a timely and appropriate manner. In addition, there was a need for far better co-ordination with and between the islands¹⁹. Being in Nassau was/is strategic in that the international team was/is close to the National Society leadership but that also meant/means that delegates are far from the operation, even though many families had fled to Nassau ahead of the hurricane. In the view of the RTE team, it would have made sense to have the main operation located in Grand Bahama, with more regular commuting to Abaco. This called for a strategic transition plan to move the operation closer to the islands.

This was starting to happen around the time of this evaluation. Following the transition from emergency to recovery, the Operation now has long-term delegates in place. At the same time, IFRC has 2 Field Co-ordinators and two Shelter Delegates in both Grand Bahama and Abaco and one Livelihoods Delegate in Grand Bahama. This should be a positive contribution towards operational support for the respective BRCS branches. At the same time, the Operation has supported the recruitment of additional BRCS national staff in the islands which is significant step forward in terms of strengthening the presence of the National Society.

4.5 SUPPORT SERVICES

4.5.1 RESOURCE MOBILISATION

The response to various appeals – those of the Secretariat, the National Society itself as well as others launched independently through several PNSs – was significant in both the speed and amount of funds and in-kind donations received. Very effective and streamlined relations were quickly established with key strategic donors. The public response was also very significant, particularly from the USA, which was likely in part due to initial fears that Hurricane Dorian would actually make landfall on the US itself, in addition to there being strong socio-cultural links between the two countries, with many Bahamians actually residing in the USA. Separate appeals for donations – through Amazon, for example – also resulted in an unanticipated high response.

The National Society has already started to preposition some stocks (mainly tarpaulins) on both Abaco and Grand Bahama though these were unfortunately lost during the hurricane. Large volumes of second hand clothing had to be removed from the warehouse in Nassau to make space for incoming donations from Amazon and others – four charter flights in total. Though welcomed, a lessons should be learned from the unco-ordinated manner in which Amazon donations were identified²⁰ and supplied: two key issues should be noted. First, the choice of items as some of those provided – such as tarpaulins – were sub-standard to needs: too many jerry cans were also provided while the teams on the ground were actually expressing the need for gloves for builders to help with clean up and repairs. An additional point refers to the volume of materials that arrived and the strain that these placed on the personnel on the ground in terms of moving storing and distributing these, which had in-built expenses related.

The main talking point of this operation, however, is the amount of funds raised and, in particular, the degree of earmarking that was mainly applies by some PNS. Overall, the amount of funds received

¹⁹ Similar observations were made in the emergency response to Hurricane Irma in Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis. IFRC, 2020.

²⁰ This is not intended to be a negative criticism: one aspect of the Amazon donation that was especially appreciated was that they “did not try and influence the selection of goods”: it was more an issue of informed planning and co-ordination with the operations team on the ground.

would appear to be disproportionate to the actual needs in addition to the phasing of the response – far greater emphasis, for example, was given to the emergency response compared with transition to recovery and the recovery process itself. This was in part due to the significant media attention generated in addition to strict earmarking of funds provided by the American Red Cross, in particular.

Different viewpoints were expressed to the RTE Team on the issue of earmarking. Most people found this to have been extremely restrictive to the extent that critical sectors and roles such as PGI and CEA could not immediately be deployed to The Bahamas. Given the circumstances and knowingly sensitive issues relating to undocumented migrants, this was a particular weakness of the operation in terms of protection itself. At the same time, however, the decision of the American Red Cross to earmark came from top management who wanted to be in control of this spending, hence the large designations to the cash programme and some of its traditional implementing partners such as Mercy Corps.

The decision to earmark was reportedly also given the broad nature of appeals and the EPoA in general. This operation saw the Movement addressing a vast array of sectors as noted from the experience highlighted in Table 2. Questions were raised as to why certain sectors, such as WASH for example, were included in the appeals when it became obvious that one of the main needs was in terms of desalination but this was already being handled by other organisations. That said, however, the WASH support provided to the temporary shelters in Nassau was much appreciated.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- An **unanticipated level of donor support** – cash and in-kind – that led to a skewed response in part, with some critical sectors not receiving the resources they needed from the outset.
- **The National Society itself launched a very effective and multipronged fund raising initiative.**
- **Heavy earmarking is thought to have prevented certain key sectors from being on the ground** from the start of the operation due to lack of funds for specific sectors.
- **Better communications and greater co-ordination are required with private sector donors**, such as Amazon.

4.5.2 HUMAN RESOURCES

IFRC's timely deployment of expertise – various levels – prior, or just subsequent, to an emergency, as well as the all-important following up stages of support has found repeated criticism in many past RTE evaluations. The same is not true, however, in the current instance at least in getting people on the ground at the outset – in this case a Team Leader was already deployed before Hurricane Dorian made landfall in The Bahamas. Probably for the first time in the Americas, the Operations Manager and Deputy positions were recruited within the first 45 days of a large-scale emergency operation, which was a significant achievement.

The first Human Resources in Emergencies profile was deployed to the Bahamas in September with a second rotation in November. Initial surge deployments were not able to clearly assess the needs in terms of Human Resources for the operation and clearly communicate this up the chain to transform this into subsequent surge requests. There was a need to evaluate the immediate urgent needs versus intermediate and the long-term, in order to request for appropriate support. The initial Team Leader needed to decide on which profiles were required immediately and the subsequent needs and timing of these deployments. This should be considered proactively for future operations where there is a clear need for training, coaching and mentoring of future and current team leaders in this respect.

Managing the surge influx was a challenge at many levels. On the one hand, the Operation was at times receiving more people than required due to the earlier requests made and misalignment between The Bahamas and the Secretariat. This was a distraction for some of the early managers as they were expected to cater for these peoples' needs. In addition to the number of people arriving, there were also questions over the profiles and competencies of some deployments: some surge delegates appeared to represent their respective PNSs rather than being part of the overall One Red Cross approach. The limited capacity of the National Society to deliver and respond to the needs of affected people – extremely limited capacity on Abaco, for example – in addition to lack of experience in specific sectors needs to be considered.

The National Society, in particular, was overwhelmed by the number of international personnel who arrived, and rightly questioned the need for so many people²¹. This responsibility then fell upon Human Resources to explain and reassure the National Society that these personnel were indeed required. With time, this situation improved and information sharing, notification of arrivals and overall co-ordination were seemingly at far better levels at the time of this RTE.

Within BRCS, the Human Resource structure was not clear in terms of what they needed vs what the National Society actually wanted. IFRC Human Resources could not provide support with the recruitment of National Society staff due to a lack of clarity on the final structure of the National Society and transparency issues in the recruitment process – due in part to the managerial transformations taking place at the time.

Having the HR in Emergency profile early in the operation helped the National Society in developing a HR contingency plan for the emergency, which included salary scales and job descriptions. The National Society leadership has now signed off on the HR policy for the salary scale and recruitment and selection policy.

The current situation has significantly improved with a new structure and organigramme for the National Society, ongoing recruitments and a long-term NSD Delegate now also on board.

In the context of a large-scale disaster in a small island state – with limited HR capacity – it is imperative to have continuous dialogue between the Region and the National Society to determine what needs to be met when, in terms of human resources. Due to the multiple rotations of surge staff without a clear prioritisation of who was needed there has been a very strong feeling that too many rotations were happening. At one point, as many as 80 foreign staff were reportedly present on the ground, compared with a national staff of 15. This included a WASH surge rotation which actually had a very limited role to play as it transpired.

The first rotation Team Leader committed to support the National Society with the recruitment of staff. In this regard, an organisational chart (including budget) was drawn up which identified key national positions that needed filling. Delayed authorisation (funding was only released on 24 September), however, meant that recruitment could not begin for the National Society though at the same time, national staff were being recruited to support the IFRC. Thus, while the operation had surge delegates and 20 national staff the National Society only managed to add one additional staff member to their team of 15 full time staff and one part-time staff. This led to some mistrust between the two parts of the Movement.

²¹ Though note should be taken of the limited and restricted capacity of the National Society at the time.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Based on discussions and observations, several aspects related to Human Resources need to be further reviewed with a need for improvement:

- the first relates to **co-ordination of deployments** so that teams on the ground know precisely who is coming into the operation (including bilateral deployments and accompanying missions), when and for what purpose. In the present instance, lack of such knowledge and responding to people arriving unannounced in country detracted from key people being able to focus adequately on their own work;
- **deploying such a large number of people – often for short timeframes – was also confusing** for the National Society who had never had to deal with such a situation previously. Members of the NS did not know who new arrivals were or what their roles were;
- as the situation started to become clearer, the manner in which most deployments entered the country on **tourist visas started being raised as a possible concern**;
- what perhaps has been **the most glaring HR gap in this response, has been the time when key delegates have not been either able to take up their positions or have failed to do so**. The case of the Finance Delegate stands out as this was unquestionably a central role in this operation given the considerable amount of funding being directed to a relatively small operation in physical terms, and with a National Society with very limited previous financial management experience and demonstrable audit track record. In this case, a candidate had been selected but, several months after this process had been completed, the person was still awaiting a visa and thus unable to take up the position. The lack of a Protection Delegate as well as a Livelihood Delegate (only arriving at the time of this RTE) were other key positions that should have been filled earlier in the operation;
- **not having pre-classified job descriptions** remains an obstacle – at present, this only exists for the Operation Manager and Relief Delegate. When job descriptions are developed in-country they are then forwarded to the region and then again to Geneva for classification. This process can take upwards of two weeks;
- another issue has been **not having the ability to post positions when there is no funding** – no soft or hard pledges. Thus, jobs are only posted once funding has been secured and allocated to the Human Resources line. Re-instating the practise of “contingent upon funding” is crucial for effective and timely emergency response; and
- there are **numerous approval processes required to open a position** with HR, Finance, Technical, Management and other sections having to sign off²². An emergency recruitment for less than six months still follows these processes but without the advertisement of the job (transparency element).

Visa attainment was an issue on two levels – first for most people coming to support the operation, they entered the country on a Tourist premise. In addition, however, and with respect to the point made above, some recruited delegates had visa issues which have lasted for 4-5 months. For countries without a Bahamas High Commission the selected candidate would need to go through a country that has such an embassy meaning that the person applying for the visa also had to go there in person to apply for the visa, a process that takes up to takes up to five weeks in some cases. This affected the intended date for one of the shelter delegates and the relief co-ordinator, while the finance delegate was still not in country at the time of this RTE.

Apart from basic rights to enter the country, international staff do not have privileges and immunities they would normally facilitate their work in a setting where the organisation has no legal status. Staff

²² HR in Emergencies is currently working on a Fastrack policy to improve the quality and response time for emergency recruitments: however, request to HR Geneva and the validation and classification of a job description takes at least 15 days.

on short- and long-term assignments (including the RTE Evaluation Team) entered the countries with visas that would not normally entitle them to carry out the work expected from them.

Despite measures taken to lessen the burden of frequent personnel changes on the National Society, including daily co-ordination meetings, the situation in general was not conducive to anyone realistically being in a position to build the capacity of the National Society at this point in time, in those circumstances.

“It took us weeks to identify other small islands that were affected.”

IFRC Delegate

In going forward (and for similar operations elsewhere, perhaps), the following should be considered:

- a) fast track emergency recruitment building on pre-classified job descriptions for commonly needed positions, such as that of the Operation Manager;
- b) need to open long-term positions at the same time as surge deployments are happening. At the time of this RTE another temporary delegate had been deployed from the ARO to support the operation.
- c) need a sustainable system for HR deployment to allow quality staff to be deployed in a short time but without diminishing the staffing capacity at the home office, e.g. the ARO or CCST. This needs to have a preparedness plan with dedicated resources; and
- d) deployed individuals and teams need to think about national staff needs before they leave: prior to departure, thought needs to be given as to how they can contribute something of longer term value to the National Society in general or to specific roles of staff.

4.5.3 REGISTRATION, CASH VOUCHER ASSISTANCE AND DISTRIBUTION

From the outset of this operation, Cash Voucher Assistance (CVA) was intended to be the main vehicle of getting support to people affected by Hurricane Dorian, in a timely and appropriate manner. This emergency response presented an important opportunity for the IFRC to apply its considerable experience and innovation in delivering cash to affected and vulnerable households and individuals in a timely, consistent, co-ordinated and transparent manner. Some US\$12 million was **strictly earmarked** by the American Red Cross for distribution – through the IFRC Secretariat and hence BRCS – to some of those people affected by Dorian.

While this was possibly one of the fastest disbursements of cash assistance by the Red Cross in a large-scale emergency, (though recognising that cash disbursements did not start until one month after the hurricane and only 420 households had received assistance as of 25 October) the process was fraught with challenges, as described below, due to pressures from the donor to implement as quickly as possible.

The American Red Cross provided an Emergency Response Unit (ERU) for cash distribution as part of the multilateral response. The ERU was supported by a co-ordinator in the American Red Cross in Washington, D.C. who then liaised with the IFRC Regional Office in Panama. Two American Red Cross cash experts were deployed on the first rotation, with a total of ten people eventually deployed to organise and operate this activity^{23, 24}. Yet, despite the level of person power, and facing some

²³ Separate assistance was eventually provided for communications (ARO support) and CEA (PNS deployments) to be part of this programme, which had very positive impacts.

²⁴ A separate Cash for Repair and Clean-up support was also made available through the American Red Cross, in collaboration with the BRCS, local authorities and CORE.

challenges²⁵, some fundamental errors were made through, for example, the failure to consider the need to communicate with affected people, the failure to share clear and transparent selection criteria and correctly and the inability to access accurate lists of affected community members. Post-distribution monitoring had not been done at the time of this RTE despite the data being provided to the IFRC early December 2019.

“There were not enough beneficiaries – we were struggling to find people to help.”

Staff Member, ARO

Starting from a very early stage of planning, one of the main and continuing challenges was the lack of a proper registration/intake form that recorded sufficient information for effective decision-making. The current form – in its 15th iteration – is also now being used to clear up other information gaps. Other problems encountered included people receiving the wrong debit cards so when it came to them trying to activate their cards there was a mismatch between the person who received it with information in the database – 10 per cent of cases initially. When recipients called to have their cards activated the information did not match, making it difficult for them to receive the intended financial assistance. Activation and deactivation of wrongly distributed cards was done by the ARO on repeated occasions.

Quality control at distribution stations was initially low but improved to overcome the challenges. Required proof of collection, for example, was to have been an initial signature on Open Data Kit (ODK), followed by a photograph, but these were not always taken at registration. Several reasons can be mentioned for this, including the fact that volunteers supporting distributions were not always the same people: there was no opportunity to properly train them and sometimes the cash team had to work with volunteers who were not familiar with ODK. During initial distribution of the cards, signatures were therefore not collected on the ODK system. With no signature, cards were not activated: people had to wait several weeks after distribution until these mistakes were finally identified and corrected.

Another fundamental flaw in this process was a lack of understanding of the ODK system, from data collection to form building. Due to the poor design of the Kobo forms a lot of vital information was not collected during registration and distribution as this was simply “not required”. For instance, photo verification was barely used as this was not built into the form as a required field. The risk of getting wrong pictures or no pictures at all of the signed proof of payments was always high.

An additional point highlighted by some surge delegates was the lack of, or inadequate, co-ordination with SIMS at the start of the intake form design since such support would have ensured adequate quality control and standardised questionnaires with all required logic and constraints.

Examples of ODK distribution forms from past operations using IFRC prepaid debit cards were shared with the first rotation of CVA experts. These, however, were seemingly discarded. As a result, a simple step of entering the envelope (with the card) number was not included in ODK form which increased the risk of issuing the envelope to the wrong person. After repeated incidents of misdistribution, the form was again changed.

Handled properly, there is a lot of flexibility in the use of ODK forms. Reviews of similar forms are available at cash-hub.org which could have been easily fixed these issues by putting in the right constraints in the ODK form. Some sectors felt that process change suggestions they made were not

²⁵ In the early stages of the emergency, a lack of clarity from government and public discriminatory messages against the Haitian population meant that an open messaging campaign was not possible and was considered a risk.

welcomed by the surge Cash IM team. Changes were made to certain to process without being discussed. As such, without sectoral input the forms just did not have the necessary constraints and logic built in to ensure quality data was collected. In addition to skewing the rational, accuracy and accountability of the cash transfer programme, these fundamental errors continue to hamper the process of selection.

Funds were allocated to prepaid debit cards in three tranches, which allowed recipients to decide how much they wished to take out at a time. A bottleneck noted in the first disbursements, however, was in relation to reconciliation and the requested release of subsequent funds. In order to activate the card, the CVA team needed to submit the distribution plan along with a request for payment. The IFRC Finance Department then prepared a reconciliation of previous disbursements and documents were sent to IFRC Treasury in Geneva. If the reconciliation is not complete, however – as was the case in the early stages of the programme – further disbursements were not possible. The sequencing of this process should have been better understood by the CVA team on the ground – who were reportedly unfamiliar with IFRC procedures – thus avoiding unnecessary delays. In addition to these shortcomings, there were also challenges with surge rotations and the absence of key staff during the December holidays to ensure a smoother third disbursement of cash.

Despite the above, 2,500 households were receiving cash transfers by the end of January 2020. The target was subsequently increased to 3,000, which meant that additional people had to be identified from the registry and subsequently contacted. Though the registration process had ended at the time of this RTE, the last group of people who received debit cards were not yet able to access funds, due to the following issues. Basically, the team identified and selected additional people to receive financial assistance and notified them of a date for distribution and card activation. However, the internal process of revising the operating budget and funding plan was not done. When the Bahamas team made the request for payment, it could not be honoured by IFRC Treasury who subsequently advised that there was a funding gap and no updated operating budget that reflected the additional funding. The soft pledge finally came in on the 6 February 2020, followed by a hard pledge on 19 February, allowing the issue to be resolved, with all payments up to date by the end of February 2020.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- When word of the CVA programme got out, more than 1,000 people arrived at the BRCS office to register. **Nothing, reportedly, was in place to commence the intake** and people naturally became angry and confused, not believing the little information that was being shared with them.
- An overall **flawed registration process** not limited to CVA (nor created by CVA) that served all interventions – the registration (“Intake”) form was revised 14 times²⁶ before the current (February 2020) IM team deployed to Nassau took up this task. Despite the early activation of the Surge Information Management System (SIMS), those working on the technology failed to avail of this service (see below also).
- Selection **criteria for those receiving cash were not shared** with key operation staff or the BRCS. While some key stakeholders reported that senior management of the BRCS were informed of selection criteria the operational teams from the National Society had not received the detailed criteria or documentation on how it was to be applied. This contrasts starkly with printed and readily accessible selection criteria on rental and repairs, as seen by the Evaluation Team on Abaco, for example.

²⁶ A multi-sectorial assessment was developed between 14-19 September, though it was never put in place. This required sectors such as Cash and Relief) to design a registration form to get beneficiary-level data. Sectors then worked individually to add their sector specific information/questions, eventually creating so many versions, creating 14-15 versions.

- Initially, **people affected by Dorian had no means of knowing that they might be eligible for relief assistance**. Only by continually – or randomly – turning up at the BRCS HQ were some people informed of this. While a decision at senior management had been taken not to publicly announce the CVA program in order to mitigate risk, clear and transparent communication with the affected communities was needed at the time.
- **People who received cash assistance were told not to speak about this to other people**. While a decision was taken to ensure the safety of the cash recipients by advising them to be discreet about the payments they were receiving, what was not analysed was how this could be counterproductive. Clear messaging and creation of an atmosphere of trust and transparency is needed.
- **Intense donor pressure to spend** – fuelled to some extent by the high media attention – meant that some steps of the CVA process were not strictly followed, which led to processes and controls not being sufficiently in place.
- **A clear and informed community engagement or communications strategy to inform the CVA process does not seem to have been in place in the first few months** of the operation resulting in not enough information on the CVA component going to the communities.
- **Lack of clarity and transparency around the selection process was confusing and unfair**. People were – and as witnessed by RTE members, still are – unsure of why they did/not receive support, even for individuals/families in similar circumstances, experiencing identical levels of loss.
- The **dedicated Hotline (two lines) was clearly inadequate** to handle the demands as people were unable to get through to the operator. The addition of a Creole language option was an afterthought.

Key points to consider in future – and this is currently of high relevance and importance for the BRCS who are about to undertake some additional cash disbursements – are:

- keep cash separate from the work of the ERU: though different teams were responsible for cash and NFI distribution this was not clear: many people spoken with are of the opinion that basic relief provision suffered as a result, possibly given the imbalance of people working on each;
- all those involved in the cash programme need to understand the full complement of 27 validation steps;
- use a local Financial Service Provider, if possible, assuming it has been fully investigated and approved by the National Society and that it can deliver the expected services in a timely and reliable manner. Work needs to be done during pre-hurricane season to ensure where possible that National Societies have framework agreements with Financial Service Providers, thus giving response options for cash distributions when a disaster strikes;
- providing (some) cash in hand could be an effective move in the first few weeks following an emergency: almost a month went by before people started to receive cash under the current practice; and
- CEA should be clearly embedded in Cash Transfer Programmes from the outset.

4.5.4 LOGISTICS AND PROCUREMENT

Few issues were highlighted in relation to both logistics and procurement, explained in part because cash disbursements featured so prominently in this operation and orders for repair and construction materials were only happening around the time of this evaluation.

Three issues should perhaps be noted, the first being the recruitment of local but inexperienced staff to cover both logistics and procurement. Some current employees were previously engaged by the National Society as drivers, before being quickly put into new positions by deployed personnel. While this was a positive move for staff, no specific training was provided nor was any substantive guidance on the policies and principles of the Movement. Relevant staff used their initiative to watch YouTube

and other media outlets to learn more about the Movement. More time and guidance should have been given – would have been greatly appreciated – to such new recruits. Some on-the-job training has taken place daily, and staffs are eager to learn new skills.

Fleet management was an additional concern as vehicles ended up being rented locally, rather than through the IFRC's normal channels. Failure to be aware of some basic considerations – such as whether a vehicle is manual or automatic, left-hand drive or right – dogged early procurement of vehicles. More seriously, however, was the lack of due diligence exercised in the run up to local vehicle rental: although the companies contracted at the outset might have seemed cheaper compared with larger international agencies when it transpired that the former lacked adequate insurance coverage, problems were encountered, some of which remained unresolved at the time of this RTE.

At the time of this RTE, eight vehicles were rented on a short-term lease basis though the intention was to move to the IFRC's Vehicle Rental Programme in October 2020, with the knowledge that the monthly costs would increase for the operation. The short-term lease plan was, however, approved by the ARO, Secretariat and IFRC's Global Logistics Service in Dubai. The current fleet includes the use of three electric vehicles being used for local mobility in Nassau – a first time experience for the IFRC which should serve as a positive example globally.

The final issue to note relates to providing early advice on specific goods and their quality for appeals such as those made by Amazon – several of which were made separately by the IFRC and National Society. The operation was not in a position – partly, but not entirely, on account of the lack of experience amongst local staff at the time – to quickly advise which items should be prioritised on the wish list. This resulted in some sub-standard quality materials being received, for example, tarpaulins, in addition to inappropriate materials such as rigid jerry cans. Having to transport and store such items placed unnecessary time, logistic and financial burdens on the operation. For future reference, it would be useful to approach Amazon – together with the American Red Cross who is the relationship manager with the company – in a more formal and co-ordinated way in order to prepare and co-ordinate donation, for instance by drawing up itemised lists from its online catalogue. The National Society should be best positioned to advise on this through their contextual knowledge.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- **Local conditions and possible options for essential services such as (temporary) vehicle hire should be known in advance.** Basic requirements – manual or automatic transmission or left or right hand drive vehicles – should be part of this stocktaking exercise.
- **Where persons providing logistic/procurement services are known to lack professional experience, extra efforts need to be provided** as soon as possible after a disaster.
- **Quality and relevance should guide the elaboration of donor wish lists** to ensure that goods received closely match peoples' needs.

4.5.5 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The lack of a legal status²⁷ for IFRC to operate in the Bahamas – as is the case in many operating environments where it works – brought with it certain complications and challenges, some of which should likely have been known ahead of time given the precarious location of the Bahamas and the number of times it has been affected by quite similar weather events in just the past five years.

²⁷ There is a signed decision paper detailing criteria to be met when the IFRC is operating in an environment where it does not have a legal status.

Immediately after the hurricane, getting sufficient funds into The Bahamas in support of the operation was an initial challenge. The “normal solution” globally is to send IFRC delegates with cash of up to CHF10,000, depending on the limits for the country. This burden falls exclusively on IFRC surge personnel since staff from other National Societies cannot receive such working advances since they are not contracted by IFRC and there would be no chain of accountability. This resulted in operational constraints in the early stages of the operation.

Cash to support the operation, for example, was initially sent from ARO via people travelling to The Bahamas as it was not realised at the outset that wire transfers could be done. This, however, posed a potential risk to such people and is not in compliance with international procedures and has not been recommended by auditors. This should have been known in advance. The practice was suspended at the end of November 2019.

Opening bank accounts was a challenge and there is a need to learn from other operations where a bank account was not opened and funds had to be channelled through the National Society. In the current instance, feedback was that this placed a large burden on the BRCS in terms of the number of transactions they had to deal with, meaning that the capacity of the National Society had to be built around finance. As part of the NSD process, an analysis of the National Society’s existing finance structure could be based on the actual volume of transactions which is then extrapolated to fit different scenarios.

Financial appeals met with resounding success. In addition to international efforts, the BRCS launched its own national appeal through a number of portals, one of which included an online selection of items that were judged (by BRCS) as needed by affected people – similar to the “wish list” posted on the Amazon web site. In this, the National Society worked closely with local transport companies Nine to Five Imports Ltd and Post Boxes to supply basic human necessities and help with the clean-up and recovery. Through the combined approaches, BRCS raised almost USD4 million from this appeal, of which approximately USD3.9 million had been approved for release by its Board to be spent as follows: USD1.8 million on multipurpose cash grants (in a similar fashion (debit card, though branded with the BRCS emblem) to the more recent and widespread scheme, together with USD2.1 million for home repairs. In addition, two international flights arrived in September with relief items and supplies from the IFRC.

For the Hurricane Dorian Operation, there was a lot of lesson learning from previous operations and advice from the Office of Internal Audit and Investigation. Based on this, and an assessment of the requirements for opening a bank account, a decision was made to channel funds through the National Society. On the positive side, this strategy has ensured adequate cash flow for the operation without exposing delegates to the risk of carrying large sums of money across borders and ensure compliance with the procedures for working advances. Furthermore, it has also helped ensure that IFRC worked closely with BRCS and therefore strengthened its capacity to manage a large influx of cash for programming. AT the same time, however, feedback has shown that this strategy placed a large burden on a small National Society in terms of number of transactions that it would needs to deal with.

The early deployment of a Finance Delegate/RIT helped ease this burden on the National Society. Beyond just the deployment of the Finance Delegate, the capacity of the National Society finance staff needed to be built around IFRC systems and procedures. At the onset, or before, a disaster an analysis is needed of the existing finance capacity and structure in order to inform a potential structure to handle the anticipated needs during a response operation. There is a need to build a system where human resource capacity in finance for emergency deployment can be made available. There is a need to have a pool of people who have the knowledge and skills in finance to deploy at a moment’s notice. While FACT/surge delegates have been trained in

all other sectors there has not been an effort for surge to develop and train finance profiles thus the over reliance on IFRC country, CCST and Regional Finance teams on such occasions.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Assessments and decisions were made early on the movement of funds to the operation which limited the risk to staff. While solutions implemented in this operation can be replicated in others not all operational contexts are the same and there is need to explore other options (including, but not limited to, the use of prepaid debit card/credit cards) that do not put staff at risk or increase the organisations expose to other risks. **Modern 21st century solutions need to be found to overcome the need for delegates to carry cash** to emergency operations.
- **Opportunities to strengthen the National Society's finance management were seized.**
- At the global level, **there is a need to develop surge finance training** for National Societies, with clear competencies and role profiles.

4.5.6 VOLUNTEERING

The Volunteering Development Framework was introduced to the National Society Volunteering Officer in February 2019 as part of a regional workshop held in Barbados. Preliminary plans were made in relation to implementing the Framework. Hurricane Dorian of course changed the focus of volunteering development and existing plans now need to be followed up.

Prior to Hurricane Dorian, the BRCS had a very modest volunteer base, numbering from around 70 on Abaco to reportedly around 200 in Nassau, though there is considerable variation on the latter figure depending on who one speaks with²⁸. It was widely reported, however, that volunteering is not a strong element of the Bahamian culture, which suggests that the BRCS may need a different model for building and maintaining an effective volunteer network on all islands where it is – or intends to be – represented. At present, however, the National Society does not have the capacity to recruit and/or manage volunteers.

Immediately following Dorian, large numbers of people – Bahamian and foreigners, even tourists – came to BRCS HQ to offer their assistance. While this was a generous outpouring from people wishing to help, it placed additional stress on an already overwhelmed National Society, struggling to get to grips with much larger operational – and institutional – challenges. In relation to this, a number of risk issues were flagged with the Evaluation Team (see below) which need to be addressed (and corrected going forward) by the BRCS, but which are likely also important considerations for other National Societies who might face similar circumstances.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Many, perhaps most, **spontaneous volunteers received no introduction to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement** prior to starting to help BRCS. Though no incidents were seemingly reported, the greatest risk in such situations is through unknown people having direct contact with traumatised and vulnerable people which could have had multiple negative impacts, in addition to being a serious risk for the Movement's own reputation and credibility.
- At the same time, **spontaneous volunteers were provided with BRCS visibility vests**, which would normally confirm that they are a screened and approved representative of the Movement.
- On Abaco, and to some degree on Grand Bahama, **where there were just a few registered volunteers, day labourers were hired and paid by the BRCS**. This was not a problem *per se* though

²⁸ During the time the RTE Team was in Nassau, an average of five volunteers were registering each day with the BRCS.

it may contribute to some people not willing to offer their services as a volunteer in the future, while knowing there is perhaps a fallback potential to get paid for work.

- At the same time, **some pre-existing volunteers have received “per diems”** to perform their duties on a regular basis. Though not yet realised, this could create a legal problem as their duties could then be seen as a regular job.
- Regular **volunteers also seemingly do not know how to activate the IFRC Volunteer Insurance scheme** in case of an accident. At the same time, there was no clarity about what would happen if a spontaneous volunteer had an accident.

In fairness, the National Society also took certain positive, forward looking actions. In the midst of the emergency response, efforts were made to put in place procedures that were missing and propose a new structure for volunteering. Importantly, on 15 October 2019, the Board approved the Volunteering Policy for the BRCS which forms the basis for future volunteering development.

The intention to establish a larger and more professional volunteer base is, now, part of the BRCS’ development plan. As part of this, it might be worth considering further options for what is already an interesting – and strategic – approach that had started with the BRCS’ former social welfare focus, namely the engagement of trained volunteers from the Ministry of Health who have provided essential and much valued PSS treatment and support post-Dorian. This has been particularly welcomed given the length of time that some people had to endure high winds and heavy rainfall while the hurricane remained almost stationary over parts of the islands.

Many spontaneous volunteers and daily workers have joined the BRCS after the disaster: timely and complete induction is key to mitigate future risks. The National Society has raised considerable amounts of funds through its independent appeals and the National Society’s transparency and accountability will be very important in going forward. Currently, the Volunteering Officer is supporting many areas within the National Society and requires support to provide management and supporting of volunteers (two new volunteering assistants will be hired to provide support to the Officer).

Future considerations for BRCS (with support perhaps from certain PNSs) might include the following:

- hire at least 2-3 dedicated staff to take on and develop a volunteering programme. Apart from lessening the workload of the current Volunteering Officer, this would allow this essential service to become better structured and supportive of a professional group of people;
- regular volunteers should be aware and avail (if necessary) of the PSS service available to them;
- implement the Volunteering Development Framework as part of OCAC and the NSD plan. This should include structured and rigorous screening of recruited volunteers: it is envisaged that a Volunteering Manager will be hired to strengthen the management of volunteering in BRCS; and
- where possible, follow-up should take place with local people who acted as spontaneous volunteers, thanking them for their time and inviting them to consider volunteering on a more regular basis.

4.5.7 NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned previously, the BRCS was not in a position to respond to this emergency and deal with the implications of an extremely well-resourced response. The National Society faced a number of very challenging moments at the outset, including:

- a) internal staff changes, which included an outgoing Director General and recently appointed President;
- b) institutional challenges, which led to the immediate integration of NSD and the appointment of senior liaison personnel;
- c) the poor state of Branches – particularly that on Abaco – and weak volunteering network; and

- d) having to deal with an influx of technical and administrative deployments, many of which could have resulted in serious problems for the organisation itself, as well as the Movement overall.

To give credit to the BRCS, it did not allow itself to be swamped by the international response and not only continued its traditional role as a National Society – its social work in addition to supporting government – but also actively engaged with the response itself, despite clearly not having the expertise or human resources to do this. In time, and with strategic staff appointments it has grown in confidence and authority in managing responsibilities.

While the National Society lacked a dedicated NSD Focal Point, the persons deployed to assist and mentor with this role played a pivotal role in helping them understand how to be better focused and organised, how to manage the international deployments and how to start to position itself in going forward. Based on an earlier (revised) OCAC, the BRCS now has an ambitious National Society Development plan which, amongst many activities, foresees a much stronger and wider presence and visibility on key Family Islands, with functioning Branches and Volunteering Networks. Going forward, these plans will also continue to connect and strengthen relevant sectors, enhancing the capacity and competencies of the National Society.

Getting to this stage will take time and resources, though at least one PNS has expressed a desire to support the BRCS with this development. While recognising that full advantage has not – could not have – been grasped in terms of active learning alongside international experts deployed for short periods of time, the dedication and focus shown by the National Society is perhaps one of the strongest positive messages to come from this operation, which will hopefully inspire other small island states in The Caribbean and elsewhere. Inclusion of NSD in the operation has undoubtedly played a key role in this.

Going forward, NSD should be clearly positioned as an integrated and cross-cutting activity that traverses from the emergency response to recovery and exit, with National Society commitment and ownership at the forefront. Adding to this, the Movement should consider deploying NSD capacity in the first rotation to support smaller and perhaps less-experienced National Societies to deal with the emergency response.

Before this disaster, the BRCS had two branches on two islands and 12 groups on another 10 islands. Now, its plan is to have a presence and services in 15 islands apart from New Providence. There is therefore a need to allocate considerable resources for the mid- and long -term development of the National Society to strengthen its organisational and operational preparedness capacity in all key, relevant sectors.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Despite having experienced several intense storms in recent years, **the National Society was clearly not prepared to respond to even a much smaller scale emergency** and in particular one that struck different parts of the country.
- Even though it was experiencing internal staffing changes at and during the early part of the emergency, **the National Society made a very credible effort to maintain control**, including coping with a large and sudden influx of international experts.
- **The BRCS has firmly embraced NSD in its vision for the future** and, with guidance, assistance and support from other parts of the Movement is already taking positive steps towards strengthening its internal capacity, external networks (including volunteering) and presence on other islands. This is a very positive lesson for other small island states in the Caribbean.

4.5.8 CASE MANAGEMENT

Case management is a methodology not a programme in itself. Prior to Hurricane Dorian, BRCS was already applying Case Management as part of its social service support, though at a very informal level. This continued at a low level during the initial stages of the response before being finally enhanced with assistance from the Canadian Red Cross and others. Case Management, however, was not meaningfully linked to any programme for the first several months of the emergency response operation.

The case management approach was proposed by the Canadian Red Cross to the BRCs (and IFRC) as similarities were noted between the unfolding Dorian response and recent large-scale operations in Canada where the Canadian Red Cross has successfully used a case management approach.

The Bahamian socio-economic context and the impact of Dorian on the affected population, however, warranted a different modality for the provision of humanitarian assistance than what the IFRC is accustomed to providing. The IFRC's humanitarian assistance model that targets and then organises whole communities or groups of affected people into categories to receive pre-determined modules or packages of assistance is not efficient and effective when dealing with an affected population that has considerably divergent conditions, needs and interests. Given the diversity of the disaster-affected population in the Bahamas, the relationship with beneficiaries should not be a single point/moment of contact but rather a continuum of support from relief to long-term recovery, tailored to each individual and/or a family's unique conditions and needs.

The BRCS indicated that they wanted Case Management to be a central modality for their engagement with the affected communities for the recovery operation as well as for their own regular programming. Following discussions, key stakeholders – the BRCS, IFRC, Canadian Red Cross, American Red Cross and the ICRC – approved this concept at a Movement co-ordination meeting and started to contribute towards it. A Working Group comprised of IFRC, the Canadian Red Cross, American Red Cross and IM experts were subsequently tasked with reviewing and recommending a data base and information management system for the Case Management approach.

Through support provided in this response, eight Case Workers (including one supervisor who has some BRCS volunteering experience and knows the Social Services in The Bahamas) were hired. At the time of this RTE, Case Workers were seeing an average of eight people per day. Data were still, however, being recorded on paper. From observations and discussions on Grand Bahama, the Case Management process there is very basic: there was no similar service on Abaco at the time of this RTE.

Case Management and protection issues were a distinct weakness in the initial response – there was, for example no PGI coverage from December to end-February. This, combined with a lack of clear, early communications to affected people, meant that the only way that they were able to get information was to come to the BRCS office or through word of mouth.

A further shortcoming in relation to Case Management was the length of time taken to secure a data collection and management system. The Working Group committee reviewed a number of possible options, both internal and external to the IFRC/ICRC, and ultimately focused on four options:

- a) the Co-ordinated Assistance Network, as used by the American Red Cross;
- b) a Family Linking App Case Management System, employed by the ICRC;
- c) Open Data Kit 2.0 (ODK); and
- d) Open Source Case Management and Record Keeping System (OSCaR).

A decision to use OSCaR for the operation was taken by IFRC and the BRCS as features of the software include the following:

- ease of use, especially for those with limited computer proficiency;
- lower cost of implementation/operation than comparable systems;
- it was developed for humanitarian agencies by a humanitarian agency, as opposed to a generic system configured to act as humanitarian tool;
- has a short deployment and set-up time requirements;
- provides a monitoring and reporting tool on services provided to beneficiaries for accountability to communities and donors;
- offers a system to manage referrals for people with additional needs to other available recovery services; and
- is accessible via a web and mobile app.

While OSCaR has been used by a few PNSs in their domestic situations, it had not been used in an international emergency response, was considered still largely untested and had not been contextualised to the situation/needs in The Bahamas. Though agreement was reached on the use of this software, considerable delays were then experienced within IFRC in the contractual details and procurement, resulting in valuable time being lost: at the time of this RTE it was expected to be introduced to the operation by a Delegate from Sweden on or around 5 April 2020²⁹.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- **Procedures around Case Management were not in place at the BRCS** and were not established at the time of the disaster. This contributed to the operation not being able to competently identify the most vulnerable people to who to then provide a relevant and appropriate service, e.g. shelter, cash or a referral, and ensure that follow-up took place.
- **Administrative failure to put in place an agreed upon, centralised data collection and management system in a timely manner should not occur in an emergency response**, where negative impacts have clearly been noted.
- The **BRCS remains supportive of Case Management** and sees the importance of this for improved service delivery in its future humanitarian work. It is expected that this will also contribute to improved advocacy on sensitive issues with the government.
- The **BRCS is currently working on Case Management policies and procedures** but lacks a dedicated person wholly responsible for this and protection, in general.

4.5.9 COMMUNICATIONS

An active communications strategy was put in place for this operation, which attracted considerable attention from global media and provided the Movement with a great deal of visibility. During the first week following Dorian reaching the Bahamas:

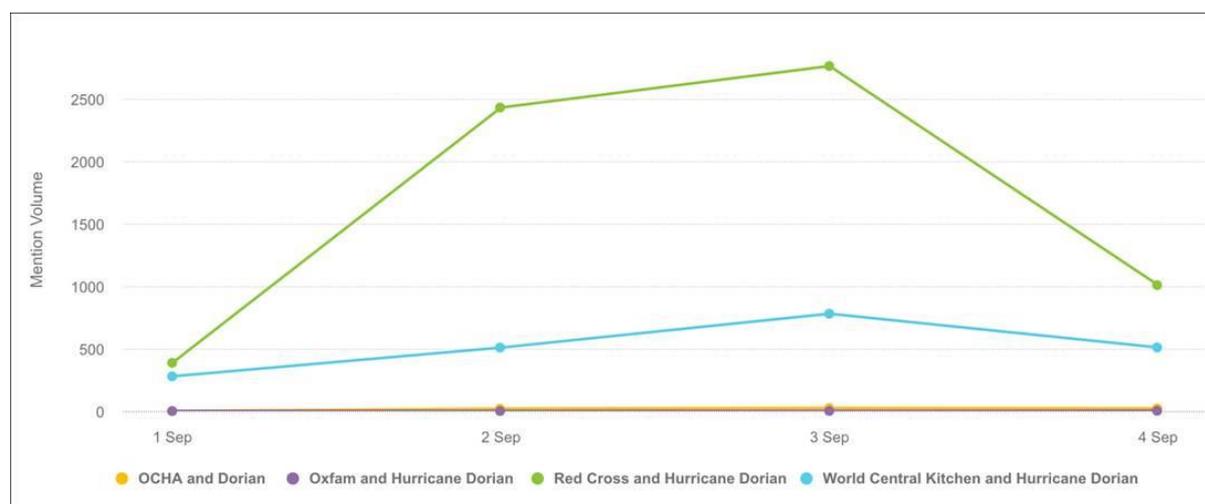
- more than 9,000 mentions were made on social media;
- more than 680,000 social media impressions were recorded from across all major social media platforms;
- a 152 per cent increase on traffic was recorded on <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc>; and
- interviews were given and mention recorded on key media outlets such as BBC News, ABC News, CNN International, Al Jazeera, PBS Newshour, CNN Española, Sky News, Reuters, The

²⁹ This was confirmed in follow-up discussions with the Operations Team: though the delegate was not able to travel to The Bahamas due to restrictions around COVID-19, remote support – together with assistance from other delegates on the ground – was allowing the BRCS to start applying the system.

Independent, Deutsche Welle, Euronews, USA Today, CTV News, The Guardian, New York Times, Time and more.

A comparison of media mentions from different organisations including the Red Cross is shown in Figure 3, which indicates a far higher rate of reporting – 4-5 times on occasion – of the Movement’s operation compared with others. Media attention, however, declined very quickly after a few days following the passage of Dorian.

Figure 3. Selected media coverage immediately following Hurricane Dorian



Source: Communications Department, ARO

The National Society itself was also active in terms of communications with the media with occasional appearances of Senior Management on television and radio. Communication experts from the ARO worked closely with the National Society, despite there being no focal person appointed at the time. The ARO tried to deploy a communications delegate ahead of the hurricane though a shortage of resources did not allow for this to happen. The American Red Cross did succeed in deploying a delegate through the Federation to help manage media requests after the event.

Key messages were prepared and sent to the BRCS, which enabled them to reach out to local, regional and international media. IFRC and engaged PNSs were conscious of the need to provide visibility for the National Society in all external communications, which was a good move.

Communication lines were quickly established by the first deployed experts with the National Society. Daily co-ordination meetings – with additional group gatherings as needed – were organised with these phasing down in regularity as the operation progressed. This contributed to a good and free flow of information between the Movement partners and others contracted directly by the American Red Cross, for example. Monthly information bulletins were also provided. More could perhaps have been done to improve operations communications between Nassau and Panama City and Geneva as some of the information shared with staff at these levels was either not always reliable or entirely accurate.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- **Both the IFRC and the National Society rose to the occasion in terms of dealing with the overwhelming requirements for external communication on Hurricane Dorian.**
- **Good practices from this operation** in terms of responding to high demand for external communication and positioning **need to be drafted and shared with all regions.**

- **IFRC and National Society communication systems need to be analysed** in more detail in order to understand the success of resource mobilisation campaigns in this operation.

4.6 EXTERNAL CO-ORDINATION

Information sharing and co-ordination with government authorities has reportedly been very satisfactory. The Hurricane Dorian operation co-ordinated with OCHA on using one template for the 3Ws (Who is doing what and where?) and had had regular meetings on health issues with the Bahamas Psychological Association, Ministry of Health, the Pan American Health Organisation and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) around Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services, Public Health messaging and notifiable diseases. The team was also part of the Protection Working Group and Emergency Shelter Working Group

In the first few months, the operations team also held co-ordination meetings on lists of missing persons with DOSS, USAID, IOM and the BRCS /ICRC, with an intended outcome to get a round table group of all organisations and authorities involved.

Importantly, in the current context of this response, BRCS was already a member of NEMA, facilitated through the good relationships the former Director General had with the agency. In addition, as of 30 August 2019, the BRCS had some of its Nassau-based volunteers embedded within NEMA's National Emergency Operations Centre, which was activated the same day.

At the time of this RTE, the BRCS was continuing to meet on a regular basis with The Bahamas Disaster Reconstruction Authority (DRA) which has now taken over the management of the Dorian recovery period, allowing NEMA to refocus its attention on emergencies.

The DRA is responsible for the management of reconstruction and restoration in disaster zones, as well as establishing criteria, procedures and processes for transitional housing, services and assistance. Its functions include assessing the reconstruction needs, preparing a reconstruction plan, and oversight, monitoring and regulation, and coordinating relations with national and international bodies. The DRA has the powers to accept, deposit and act as trustee and manager of gifts and donations, enter into contracts, invest funds, appoint employees and take necessary legal action to implement reconstruction operations. The Authority will work with the recently created Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction to continue the reconstruction program for Grand Bahama, Abaco and the Abaco Cays.

The Shelter Cluster *per se* was not activated in the Bahamas: however, at the behest of the government, the IFRC was requested to assist in the co-ordination of the ESF 6 – Mass Care and Shelter Service. As such IFRC became the international counterpart to the DOSS for shelter co-ordination. To provide this assistance a SSCT was deployed, with the IFRC playing an important role in this respect for a period of five months, working closely with NEMA and other external partners. Weekly meetings were held with partners in Grand Bahamas and Abaco to ensure a well-coordinated approach to shelter. Funding of this co-ordination has been through unearmarked funds in the Appeal. Actual handover to the government at the time of this RTE was a reflection of the lack of funding, not that needs had been fulfilled.

UNDP supported the government with the organisation of the Hurricane Dorian Private Sector Pledging Conference on 13 January at the Baha Mar Convention Centre. The BRCS, senior management from the IFRC delegation and the Shelter Sector co-ordination team attended this event. The outcome of the Conference was to collect the final pledging statements made by private sectors, international financial institutions, multilateral organisations, governments, businesses and

individuals. As part of its follow-up, the BRCS is currently holding discussions with The Nature Conservancy on some potential shared programmes focused on ecosystem-based disaster preparedness for exposed parts of The Bahamas.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- **The BRCS, in its auxiliary capacity role, was strategically placed** to link with and provide support to strategic government agencies.
- **Prior relationships with key government agencies (DOSS and NEMA, for example) helped ensure good and informed information exchanges** with the National Society.
- **The National Society should build on the experience and exposure it has received** from the response and recovery to strengthen and expand its presence, visibility and links with other potential partners, including the private sector.

5. OECD-DAC CRITERIA

5.1 RELEVANCE

Even in a country of such economic prosperity as The Bahamas, there are always some parts of society who are not going to be in the position of being able to recover swiftly from losses and damage such as that observed following the passage of Hurricane Dorian. Thus, there is no question concerning the relevance and appropriateness of the emergency response operation overall. The combination of hardware (for example, relief items) and software (PSS support) was particularly appropriate in this instance and should be mirrored in similar future operations. **Questions should, however, be raised on the following:**

- **in terms of scale, the number of people actually reached through this response;**
- **the timeliness of some support provided (e.g. home repairs only starting six months after the event);**
- **questions relating to transparency and accountability in terms of reaching undocumented migrants; and**
- **whether those people who did receive support in the aftermath of Dorian were in fact the most deserving.**

As discussed in Section 4.5.3, serious concerns have surrounded the subject of how people were registered and subsequently selected for relief (including cash) assistance. In addition, given the lack of follow-up it is not possible to ascertain to what degree did, for example, cash assistance, actually help people/households to recover. In a separate assessment, when asked what peoples' top three priorities were after livelihoods financial assistance was provided, the responses were food and water, housing and clothes, in that order³⁰.

The response itself has certainly proved relevant and appropriate for the National Society. Formerly a modestly known social welfare provider, providing meals and second hand clothes to people, the Society is now undergoing a significant transformation to position itself as an important humanitarian structure both within The Bahamas (including strengthening its auxiliary role with government) and in the wider region. This would likely not have happened without assistance and encouragement from within the Movement, in addition to the resources it itself have been able to requisition.

³⁰ Source: Early Recovery Assessment and Plan.

Other learning points in terms of relevance include:

- as the BRCS prepares to launch its own cash distribution programme, it is important to learn from the current experience, in terms of selection criteria, communications with the public (not only beneficiaries), post distribution monitoring and more;
- experience from this disaster has shown the importance of PSS for affected people and their families;
- the important role played by case workers should be sustained going forward and in preparedness for a future event.

5.2 EFFECTIVENESS

The emergency response has made significant contributions towards the strategic recovery of some people directly and indirectly affected by Hurricane Dorian. Directly in the sense that people who may have lost possessions or who were forced to leave their homes and find sanctuary elsewhere may have received some emergency relief items or cash support which have enabled them to start to address some of their most basic needs. Indirectly, households in Nassau, in particular, who took in relatives and strangers and cared for them for some time may also have received assistance from the BRCS, thus easing the burden on their own resources.

At the same time, however, given the generous response from the public and donors, in addition to the presence of a considerable number of technical experts in many fields of experience, the overall effectiveness of this response could most likely have been improved had better matching of needs and expertise been conducted. With this, the likelihood of assistance reaching a greater proportion of those most affected would have been greater.

The financial assistance component of this response was the largest cash assistance project in the Americas in terms of the size of the disbursement and the total amount distributed. This also was probably the quickest distribution of cash assistance in the Americas, if not globally, for the Red Cross “in a large-scale disaster”.

The Americas region has had debit cards prepositioned in the Regional Office since 2014. A formal service agreement was signed in 2015 with the financial service provider to have the cards and the system prepositioned for any disaster in the Americas. Effectively, this enabled the ARO to quickly send its existing stock of pre-paid cards to Nassau.

The operation identified a much-needed profile that did not exist before – an “Encashment Delegate”. This profile provided technical support on how the cards should be used and managed, in addition to trouble shooting on the web-based platform for cards, re-assignment of cards and checking encashment. Formerly a task for the Regional Co-ordinator for Cash, having this position in the field for a large-scale operation such as this helped ensure continuous support for the operation and avoided possible challenges with time zone differences. This role should also have allowed for more effective monitoring and proactive resolution of unanticipated issues.

5.3 COVERAGE

In its 2006 guide for evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC Criteria, ALNAP³¹ cites for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief concerning coverage and who should receive support (see Box).

Red Cross/Red Crescent Code of Conduct and Coverage

Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone. Wherever possible, we will base the provision of relief aid upon a thorough assessment of the needs of the disaster victims and the local capacities already in place to meet those needs. Within the entirety of our programmes, we will reflect considerations of proportionality. Human suffering must be alleviated whenever it is found; life is as precious in one part of a country as another. Thus, our provision of aid will reflect the degree of suffering it seeks to alleviate.

Source: <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/code.asp>

In considering Coverage, one needs to consider three different levels – international, national/regional and local. Coverage and co-ordination at the international level were conducted to a high level of satisfaction in this instance, in many ways, including media handling and communications in addition to the global response from surge delegates and expressions of support from so many PNSs.

The same was largely true at the regional level where timely and relevant support were (still at the time of this RTE) provided from both the ARO and CCST, with the intention that this will continue for the meantime.

Observations at the national and local levels, however, not as positive. One of the most challenging – and frequently overlooked – circumstances in this response has been the physical area that needed to be covered, in addition to the fact that operational support was needed on three separate islands. Priority was given to providing immediate relief was provided to people in Nassau, and to some degree on Grand Bahama, both of which could be justified by the reported numbers of people who fled to New Providence from Abaco and Grand Bahama ahead of – or following – the hurricane. Despite some indications of the damage inflicted on Abaco, however, support was extremely delayed in getting to these islands. Greater detail should have been given to inter-island logistics and, in particular, figuring out when and how to reach out to people who remained on Abaco itself.

The greatest shortcoming of this entire response, however, relates to the failure to openly acknowledge, respect and advocate for the needs of so many unregistered migrants who remained on Abaco, in particular, who possibly suffered the greatest losses of all and were rendered in a state of confusion, fear and hopelessness. The National Society and Movement as a whole needs to seriously examine why so little was done immediately after the disaster struck to represent this part of society. Questions surrounding who in fact benefitted from support also need to be discussed, recognising that this will be challenging given the disarray in the registration process.

³¹ http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/eha_2006.pdf

5.4 CO-ORDINATION

As mentioned above, co-ordination within the Movement and between different actors was, in general, reported to have been very successful. With knowledge from other operations, the initial support from the CCST (in relation to NSD), together with the Operations Manager, established a co-ordination mechanism that involved two daily meetings with counterparts at the BRCS. While the situation was reportedly “chaotic” (with the arrival of so many people from within the Movement), such meetings were judged to have been of extreme importance in helping the National Society retain some degree of control over the situation. Gradually, such meetings were taken over by the National Society itself, which was a very positive move.

On the ground, as in a great many emergencies, there is always room for improvement with the arrival and departure of surge and other delegates, which was again the case in this response. Several people spoken with reported that they were not aware who was expected via the surge system, when they were due to arrive and why they were coming in the first instance. More attention is clearly needed to improve this aspect of emergency response, ensuring that priority needs are being met and that key personnel deployed to organise the emergency relief operation are allowed to fully concentrate on their intended role.

While inter-agency co-ordination was in large effective, there was a distinct lack of inter-sectoral co-ordination between the many different programmes, most of which appear to have worked in isolation of others. There was very little evidence of any cross-cutting co-ordination in the early stages of the operation though improvements had been made by the time of this evaluation. Given that most programme delegates were housed in the same office block in Nassau, this was a surprising find in some ways though not totally unexpected.

External co-ordination with government (including CDEMA, NEMA and DOSS) in setting up the response was also in large effective and respected, the Shelter Sector Co-ordination Team, for example providing timely and much appreciated guidance – contributing to Interim Build Back Better Guidance for House Repairs, as well as the Strategic Framework for the Bahamas Shelter Sector for the DRA). Yet again, however, given the good relations shared between the National Society and government departments, greater co-ordination could likely have happened in terms of accessing the shelter centres³² in Nassau, helping ensure peoples’ rights were being respected and protection issues addressed and well as getting clearance for key administrative matters.

Close and frequent co-ordination was also established with some key and traditional donors, including OFDA, ECHO and DfID. Links with the World Food Programme in the early days following Dorian were crucial in getting supplies to people in need.

5.5 CONNECTEDNESS

“Connectedness” refers to the need to ensure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account.

Tracking the shifting pathway of Hurricane Dorian, together with early planning and the deployment several key people to Nassau ahead of the hurricane making landfall were highly strategic actions taken by different arms of the Movement. In the immediate aftermath, the BRCS’ connections with different parts of the government came into their own, particularly with regards the DOSS and NEMA.

³² IFRC and BRCS played several important roles here, including providing portable toilets. Different reports were provided to the RTE Team on conditions and access to these centres: when the Team itself (accompanied with a staff member from the National Society) tried to access on Shelter Centre, it was denied permission.

Given the good relationships that reportedly existed between key figures in the National Society at the time, and government, more could however have likely been achieved, for example the signature of a legal status for the IFRC, which is still on hold.

The launch of Early Recovery Assessment in October 2019 was an important occasion for the BRCS, IFRC and other Movement partners to assess needs and opportunities and begin to chart a way forward towards early recovery. It was widely felt, however, that not enough commitment or resources were given to this process and that some elements – for example finalisation of the EPOA – took too long before being approved. Part of this suggested process – “identifying additional potential local partners for augmenting impact”³³, i.e., supporting localisation does not seem to have gained much ground in the response.

6. SOME LESSONS LEARNED

6.1 LESSONS WITH PARTICULAR RELEVANCE TO SMALL ISLAND STATES

- √ A National Society should do its utmost to preserve its identity following a disaster, particularly if faced with a large influx of temporary deployments.
- √ A National Society should use the occasion of a disaster response to increase its knowledge and strengthen build its internal organizational capacity in addition to external organizational linkages.
- √ Rapid assessments are essential in the first few days following an emergency. These should be coordinated with government authorities/responsible services.
- √ National Societies could have significant influence with affected governments in their auxiliary roles. Many government services are likely to be dysfunctional and/or overwhelmed. National Societies should have a plan on how to move.
- √ In its auxiliary role to government a National Society may find itself in a position to be able to advocate for positive human rights changes in addition to being able to call on highly technical expert advice through the Movement, for example in terms of forensics to support local government.
- √ Strategic links – as the BRCS’ link with the Ministry of Health for PSS support – should be identified and put in place.
- √ Building the internal and external (linkages) capacity of a National Society is fundamental.
- √ Volunteer networks need to be trained and aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- √ Where more than one island forms part of the country, a strategy should be developed to respond to different geographical locations: this requires advance logistics preparedness.
- √ Pre-position stocks at strategic locations, preferentially in collaboration with a structure such as NEMA who should assume responsibility for safeguarding these.
- √ Work needs to be done during pre-hurricane season to ensure where possible that National Societies have framework agreements with Financial Service Providers, thus giving response options for cash distributions when a disaster strikes.
- √ National Societies should be aware of what surge capacity is (not) available the region, including language/linguistic needs.

6.2 GENERAL

Be strategic rather than widespread.

Based on its experience, IFRC should be better positioned for making key judgement calls on which sectors it should target for intervention at the risk of diminishing/excluding support to other vital

³³ Hurricane Dorian Early Recovery Assessment and Plan.

sectors, such as protection. The presence of other actors capable of doing similar roles should also be considered, particularly in the current response where there were some needs which might not have been prioritised as high as others. Following an early assessment, proposed WASH interventions by IFRC were not deemed appropriate and were rejected by the government, partly on account of the number of other agencies providing or distributing safe drinking water. At the same time, however, two WASH co-ordinators, in addition to a WASH delegate, were deployed.

Learn from deployment bottlenecks and excesses.

The scale of deployments for this emergency response was probably excessive to needs but, at the same time, some critical roles were not comprehensively or continuously covered from the outset – PGI, NSD and CEA, for example. Deploying too many people during the immediate (first week) aftermath of a disaster can be an unnecessary burden on personnel under pressure. Priority needs to be given to life saving roles – and the systems to support these – at such times and not, for instance, on immediate recovery actions.

Delays in filling longer-term positions need to be overcome.

Some key positions were not filled on time – finance and livelihoods, for example. Recruitment challenges are not new in such scenarios but at the same time it is unfair to both the intended deployer as well as the operation itself to keep key positions unresolved for several months. At the same time, there was an over concentration of international expertise in the Nassau office while the most urgent needs on Abaco and Grand Bahama went unmet. Getting it right at the field level was also crucial to ensuring smooth follow-up for next steps/validation of cash disbursements.

A donor driven response can detract from operational priorities.

A donor driven response can have negative ramifications on operations and co-ordination through, for example:

- heavy earmarking that precludes some fundamental sectors from being adequately funded – in this instance, shelter, PGI, CEA and NSD, amongst others;
- the need to work on the timelines of the donors as opposed to the needs of the operation and communities; and
- unanticipated costs in relation to diverted attention and human resources, as well as the need to provide/manage transportation, and the handling and distribution of received goods from private donations and the private sector.

Spontaneous donations need to be seen in balance.

Operations should be clear about the potential “hidden costs” of some in-kind donations which may not be appropriate for a particular situation or context, or which might have unforeseen consequences in terms of handling, transportation or occupying warehouse space – and the economic costs associated with these. Dispatch of heavy cargo also needs to be staggered to allow goods to be distributed and make space for others in warehouses or similar facilities.

Communications – successful but room for improvement.

Communications were both effective and not sufficient in this operation – effective in terms of media outreach and interest which was seemingly handled very competently by the country team and the National Society, with presence at the BRCS. Good co-ordination was also reported between BRCS and the American Red Cross, for example, in ensuring the former were visibly identified on all shared activities. On the other hand, the failure to engage with those targeted for selected interventions through appropriate communication channels at the outset was unfortunate, even though this was later rectified to some extent by what seems to have been an effective blending of communications with CEA, relief distributions and Cash Programmes. More transparency could also have been ensured by the Movement at large in relation to the situation concerning undocumented Haitian migrants.

Appreciate feedback from donors.

This response has received significant responses from the public as well as some key Movement donors. The American Red Cross and USAID have provided approximately 77 per cent of current income or 60 per cent of the entire funding ask. The commitment of some donors in this response was also clear by their presence on the ground soon after the passage of Dorian. Communication lines were generally effective and appreciated with the exception perhaps of some donors wanting to know more on how the Movement was responding to the situation surrounding undocumented migrants, particularly on Abaco as well as New Providence. Responding to such requests in a timely and factual manner is crucial to maintaining good relations on all sides.

Case Management needed more prominence in this Operation.

Case Management did not receive the attention and support it deserved in this operation, promoted primarily through the use of an anticipated software programme, OSCAR. Though started in the last week of September, it was never fully integrated with the international response until the start of 2020. Better preparation and management planning would have been useful: earlier integration should have been there from the start, together with PGI and CEA for most vulnerable. There was, however, no budget for this at the time. Going forward, this needs to be a distinct but fully integrated component of emergency response planning and programming.

The ability for Case Management to bring sectors/programmes together was overlooked.

Despite agreement reached to move forward with Case Management for the recovery component, including the technical and financial support from the Canadian Red Cross and deployed delegates, the IFRC did not take the necessary actions to plan for case management and organise and integrate the operational teams – including relief, shelter, livelihoods and WASH – around the case management modality. Instead, these and other sectors continued to plan and implement in siloes, with limited interoperability. Hence, Case Management was also not effectively integrated into the operation and was not applied effectively in transitioning from relief to recovery.

6.3 NATIONAL SOCIETY PREPAREDNESS

Prepositioning of selected stock can be beneficial.

Having small quantities of prepositioned stocks of certain goods – for examples, tarpaulins, jerry cans, water filters or sanitary items – can be beneficial as this can allow a rapid response to perhaps several hundred families. This does, however, require management and secure space³⁴ and responsible people to look after it. Such arrangements should be conducted together with the responsible national agency, in this case NEMA.

National Societies need a volunteering strategy in place before an emergency: Opportunity missed.

In a nation where the spirit of volunteering is not always evident, the opportunity to disprove this and capitalise on the number of people that came forward to assist with relief distributions and other activities was a prime occasion – immediately in the case of the BRCS and more longer term for the IFRC in terms of visibility and promotion of its work. A strategy needs to be in place to deal with emergency situations that are likely to draw considerable attention and support. Some system needs to be in place to have people understand and sign the Code of Conduct and understand the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In this instance, Red Cross vests were reportedly given out freely to people coming to BRCS' office, which could have transformed into a significant reputational risk.

³⁴ BRCS had limited stock prepositioned on both Abaco and Grand Bahama: these, however, were lost during the hurricane.

Hotlines need careful planning and adequate resources.

Two hotlines set up at the BRCS were never going to be adequate to respond to peoples' inquiries, this further by the lack of information given out by the government as well as the Movement in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. Language skills (Creole) were an immediate gap that needed to be addressed. So too, however, was the form of manual data capture and record management (on paper) which were clearly inappropriate and inadequate. Early installation of an upgraded series of staffed, dedicated landlines at BRCS should have been considered.

6.4 MOVEMENT PREPAREDNESS

Pre-disaster deployments can make a difference.

The early deployment of an Operations Manager to Nassau ahead of Hurricane Dorian was a strategic move as this enabled initial discussions to take place with the National Society and other agencies, in readiness of the impending disaster. This, closely followed by a senior representative from the CCST, provided an initial structure from which the BRCS, ARO, Secretariat and certain PNSs could start to plan and operate from. The early presence of the CCST also enable it to better appreciate needs and operational constraints allowing it to provide additional strategic support over the following months.

IFRC needs to be better prepared to support inexperienced National Societies.

The ability and capacity of some National Societies to actively support emergency responses (whether small-, medium- or large-scale) is a challenge, as seen in this instance and experienced by other RTEs, for example, the Mozambican response to Cyclone Idai³⁵. Every effort needs to be made to ensure that a National Society is not overwhelmed or side-lined in the event of an emergency response either directly through the implications of an operation or through pressure added from bilateral programmes of a PNS. Complementarity and co-operation between all actors is crucial to ensure maximum gain is achieved for the National Society.

Clear understanding of roles is essential in an emergency response.

Several instances were noted during this evaluation where people were uncertain of the roles intended or being fulfilled by others. A better understanding of PMER's role vs Information Management, for example was one that might have improved co-ordination, for example – the PMER playing an important role in producing Situation reports and revisions to the EPoA, for example, which some people perceived as IM responsibilities. A second related to the IFRC's Shelter Sector Co-ordination Team's role – mentioned at several different levels – even though this was as a direct request by government. Reference is also made to the unexpected arrival of certain surge deployments early in the operation as well as the National Society's lack of knowledge of who many of these people were.

Cash and Voucher Assistance need meticulous planning.

Cash and Voucher Assistance can be a challenging undertaking – it cannot be treated with the same approach as, for example, NFI distributions. This needed proper planning for registration (including selection criteria) distribution and validation, which was limited due to strict donor earmarking. Those controlling financial reporting need to appreciate the need for reconciliation before additional funds are released, as this can quickly become a bottleneck. To learn from this, and continue open lines of communications with people who received assistance, timely post-distribution monitoring should be planned and conducted.

³⁵ Real Time Evaluation Mozambique: Tropical Cyclones Idai and Kenneth (2019). Final Report 8 August 2019.

6.5 RESPONSE

Keep assessments realistic and timely.

The assessment process for this operation was excessive and on occasion redundant resulting in delays in the delivery of emergency assistance, including multipurpose cash assistance for the emergency phase. The priority given to completing an exhaustive and “perfect” assessment, including the decision to wait for the government to provide lists of evacuated people before providing financial assistance, was at the expense of delivering timely assistance. This was further exacerbated by the deployment of a Recovery Assessment Team early in the operation that ended up duplicating the work of the surge (FACT) team and further delaying operational decision-making.

Avoid raising expectations.

Technical experts deployed prior to or shortly following a disaster should avoid raising expectations by making commitments and promises to the National Society, which they may not be able to follow through, for example, future financial or human resource support to the National Society. This is especially important given then early deployments are unlikely to remain in that position for more than one month. This can have negative consequences for those deployed at a later stage.

Better and timely integration is needed in operations.

Despite agreement being reached between the National Society, IFRC and the American Red Cross to move forward with case management for the early and medium-term recovery components of the operation – including the technical and financial support from Canadian Red Cross – the IFRC did not take sufficient action to organise and integrate the operational teams, i.e. relief, shelter, livelihoods, and WASH around case management. Instead the sectors continued to plan with limited integration and interoperability.

6.6 RECOVERY

Uncertain transition to recovery.

Shifting gear and moving into a recovery mode is presenting BRCS and other representatives from the Movement with challenges, particularly given the expected high levels of attention this process will attract. Good messaging is required from BRCS, both for the public and the government as well as the donor community and media. Frontline messages need to be developed, accompanied with clear and articulate communication. BRCS needs to release its messaging on transitioning to other forms of assistance and be prepared to manage expectations.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 GENERAL

Assess the benefits of consistent oversight v temporary leadership.

Greater consideration should be given to whether a HEOPS or series of Team Leaders are the likely best option for an emergency response, bearing in mind (to the degree possible) the likely expected size of the operation. If a Team Leader is put in place, a Deputy Team Leader should then also be deployed in advance of a disaster (or as soon as possible thereafter) to provide additional co-ordination capacity to support and allow the Team Leader to focus solely on operational needs. This should also be seen as a training opportunity for future Team Leaders. In such cases, a gender balance should be ensured between the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader.

Attention: Secretariat DCPRR-surge, Regional Offices DCPRR-surge.

7.2 NATIONAL SOCIETY PREPAREDNESS

Strengthening the capacity of a National Society should be prominent during an emergency response.

While it should not be assumed that a National Society will be able to devote its own resources to an emergency response, advantage should be taken of the presence of experienced, deployed personnel from within the Movement to help build the internal capacity of the National Society and enable it to further develop its auxiliary role. National societies should be encouraged to use emergency preparedness as a learning opportunity for capacity/needs assessments and view their capacity building as a continuous process: actions should build on previous and other ongoing measures.

Attention: NSD and PER, Regional Office NSD and National Society Preparedness Teams.

Monitoring systems and capacity within a National Society should be assessed at the start of an operation.

In anticipation of a situation such as this disaster (and considering the number of disasters experienced in The Bahamas within the past five years), there was an obvious need for an appropriate level of M&E to be put in place in the BRCS, as is likely the case on many other small island states in the Caribbean. The IFRC and participating PNSs need to be more understanding and supportive to National Societies in this regard. Failure to do so, as in this case, means that there are no proper means of verification concerning relief aid or cash distributed which are basic requirements for transparency and accountability. In addition to specific topics that might be tracked (e.g., relief distribution) this should also improve accountability.

Attention: Geneva and Regional Units, with National Society.

Rapid identification of people in need should be a priority.

The lack of preparedness at the national level extended to there being no procedures in place at the BRCS prior to Hurricane Dorian. Initial support from the IFRC and PNSs also failed to address this need which throws a shadow over the operation by questioning whether in fact those people most affected by Dorian – which is not only related to those whose houses might have been damaged but also the very many people in need of PSS – were actually reached.

Attention: Secretariat, Regional Offices, PNS and National Society.

Proactive logistics measures are needed in the region.

National Societies in The Caribbean – in addition to the ARO and CCST – should consider a series of proactive steps, including:

- having updated instructions for import/customs/shipping in the different countries they support³⁶;
- standard Framework Service agreements in place;
- knowledge (for ARO/CCST) of stock levels of all NSs in the Caribbean. This has started and is ongoing but remains a challenge because of staff changes; and
- prepositioning of modest numbers of core relief items.

Attention: Regional Logistics Unit.

Guidance and tools from IFRC to support National Societies' role in supporting governments with Mass Fatality Planning.

Governments of small island states may not have adequate knowledge or capacity to deal with dead bodies. National Societies have a potentially important role to fill in this instance through their

³⁶ Regional updates of shipping instructions take place every two years. At the time of the hurricane some relevant information was already in place but was also being updated to expedite the arrival of goods.

auxiliary support role. In this instance, had no experience with this though support was provided by ICRC expertise from the Washington, D.C. Delegation. The Delegate, however, was only deployed 20 days after Dorian struck landfall. In the meantime, government authorities had not considered how to handle bodies during debris removal. At first reluctant to work alongside the ICRC, as needs were realised this barrier was removed.

Attention: *IFRC.*

Guidance and tools from IFRC to support to support National Societies to ensure minimal body management knowledge.

Cultural implications of handling dead people are also important, and particularly in the case of Haitians. In addition, timely and appropriate consideration needs to be given to bereaved families to alleviate stress and trauma: A final important element of equal importance is the need to provide adequate training to body recovery teams to mitigate stress among team members.

Attention: *IFRC.*

7.3 MOVEMENT PREPAREDNESS

Emergency operations need to feature and sustain PGI, NSD and CEA from the outset.

All different in their intent, though with a common mission, PGI, NSD and CEA should be inbuilt core competencies of all emergency response operations and not left as an afterthought or an unmet gap (in the case of PGI), as in the current instance. Some key considerations that could have shaped the operation in a more positive vein include the following:

- greater focus, emphasis and advocacy on initial protection issues would likely have helped transparency and accountability issues in relation to undocumented Haitian nationals;
- early and clear communication with people affected by the disaster needed to be put in place from the start, including appropriate feedback mechanisms;
- much better targeting and selection of affected people – assuring gender inclusion – would have happened though improved community engagement;
- consideration of NSD issues could have helped BRCS avail of external support and bolster it against competing needs and approaches of members of the Movement; and
- related to this, better communication would likely have averted the negative sentiments against the NS immediately after the hurricane when many rumours were circulating within the National Society, including the intended role of the BRCS.

Attention: *Regional Disaster and Crisis Rapid Response, Regional Office DCPRR and Rapid Response.*

Maximise deployment effectiveness.

To make the above most effective, consideration should be taken of matching timeframes for external technical and administrative support missions. Such missions need to be well co-ordinated and give consideration to the needs and opportunities for capacity strengthening of the National Society, if possible and required.

Attention: *IFRC Programmes and Operations (Geneva and Americas).*

Early deployments should include a Risk Management Officer.

In cases where there is no resident capacity, an internal auditor/risk management officer should be deployed to support field teams and oversee risk compliance/monitoring. This is particularly important in situations like The Bahamas where the volume of response was unprecedented and unanticipated and where the IFRC's reputation was potentially at risk. Such a delegate would also be in position to ensure that recommendations stemming from the risk assessment were acted on during the first six months of the emergency operation.

Attention: *Regional Office Disaster and Crisis surge and Geneva Audit and Internal Investigation Unit.*

The cycle of deployments needs to be seen as a medium-term engagement, from the outset.

There is a need to find a balanced, but sustainable, system for HR deployment to allow quality staff to be deployed in a short time **without** diminishing staff capacity at the “home office” – the CCST or ARO in this case. Anticipated longer term positions need to be opened at the same time as surge deployment to avoid gaps in coverage. Visa issues for delegates need be considered when identifying possible deployments.

Attention: *Regional Office Disaster and Crisis Rapid Response and Regional Office Senior Management Team.*

Improve Human Resource planning and co-ordination for deployments.

Fast track emergency recruitment – building on pre-classified job descriptions – should be in place for all commonly needed positions, e.g. the Operation Manager. Deployments should be for a minimum of one month, but ideally three months: anything less risks being disruptive for continued functioning of that position/role, particularly if there is no satisfactory handover. It also risks that frameworks or systems are altered or changed on account of an individual’s preference. Planning for longer term staff deployments should also commence at the outset of an operation.

Attention: *Secretariat, Regional Offices, PNS and National Society.*

Data management systems should be in place as early as possible.

Data collection, analysis, storage and retrieval systems need to be developed in the first few days of an emergency response, conducted ideally together with experts in primary data collection. An information analyst and Information Management Coordinator should be deployed, together for the first one month – together with other members of the Assessment Cell. The Information Management coordinator works as the link with sectoral teams and with the remote SIMS support to ensure alignment with operational needs and provide the technical support for development and usage of “IM tools”. Sufficient time needs to be built into the operation to allow for briefing/debriefing of those being deployed

Attention: *Regional and Geneva Disaster and Crisis, Rapid Response and IM teams.*

Streamline the EPoA process and procedure.

Consideration should be given to establishing a new, more streamlined EPoA process, particularly concerning the review process. In the current situation, too many people spent too much time on both the narrative and subsequent financial components, placing unnecessary pressure on an over-stretched response team and detracting from an individual’s specified role and purpose for being in country.

Attention: *Geneva Disaster and Crisis Department and Geneva PMER.*

Re-examine earmarking strategies.

Future emergency appeals/responses need a better strategy for earmarking, with more transparency regarding support to local actors who may be in a better position to respond than international partners of a particular PNS. Quality and timely funding is needed for critical sectors (commonly protection, shelter and WASH) but also for expected cross-cutting activities such as communications, CEA and PSS. Earmarking in the current context prevented some of these activities from receiving adequate support, which has likely detracted from the overall impact of relief provided and the number of people reached. In some cases, the merits of taking a narrower and more focused approach (compared with what is currently required in the EPoA, for example) might be more appropriate than attempting to cover all sectors. Highly technical interventions that are unlikely to contribute to National Society development should be avoided.

Attention: *IFRC PRD (Geneva and Americas) in coordination with donors.*

Adequate time and resources need to be made available for thorough needs assessments.

Recognising the need to respond to peoples’ most immediate requirements following a disaster, those responsible for conducting needs assessments should be given sufficient time and resources in order to conduct this vital work so as to adequately inform planning and budgets. This was especially the case in The Bahamas where three distinct situations needed to be addressed – Abaco, Grand Bahama and displaced people in Nassau. Emergency needs assessments should, however, also consider an operation’s capacity to absorb funds. Detailed actor mapping is required.

Attention: *Disaster and Crisis Surge Team, Regional DCPRR.*

IFRC should be prepared to make calculated risks to respond instantly to most affected locations.

The delay in setting up a basecamp in Abaco – without question the island most severely impacted by Hurricane Dorian – stands out as a serious misjudgement in this operation, given the reported scale of destruction and loss of life. This should have happened irrespective of potential sensitivities related to undocumented migrants. Justification for such an installation was all the more important given the lack of the BRCS’ visibility on the island following the damage to its former office.

Attention: *Disaster and Crisis Surge Team, Regional DCPRR.*

Cash and Voucher Assistance needs to be approached as an integrated activity.

The IFRC as a whole needs to invest in getting cash transfers right from the start in order to be a recognised first class cash agency in this sector. Questions need to be asked regarding the manner in which this was handled in this operation. CVA should not be seen as an independent activity as it was largely at the outset of this operation: an integrated sectoral approach cannot be realised if this is the case. All stakeholders in the CVA process should be aware of the entire series of validation steps to follow in this process: roles and responsibilities of all those operating through the ERU – or similar – need to be clearly articulated and linkages established with other sectors.

Attention: *Cash and Voucher Assistance Team.*

7.4 RECOVERY

Planning for recovery needs to start early.

Consideration should be given to recovery as early as possible in the operation and recovery needs should be integrated into the overall response. Transition to recovery should be a visible, integral and committed part of emergency response, with a suggested Exit Plan and handover strategy already defined for when the opportunity occurs. This will need to be regularly monitored and updated with all implicated partners – internal and external.

Attention: *BRCS and IFRC DCPRR and CCST, in co-ordination with national structures and donors.*

Remain realistic and focused on mandate.

The Movement needs to be reasonable and not over-ambitious in its planning for recovery, bearing in mind the future intentions/aspirations of the National Society and balancing this with “informed knowledge” of what is needed and what can be achieved. The decided approach to building resilience needs to be holistic, addressing social, economic (livelihoods) and environmental needs.

Attention: *BRCS and IFRC Programmes and Operations (Americas and CCST), in co-ordination with national structures, specialist NGOs/agencies and donors.*

8. CONCLUSIONS

This has been well resourced emergency response in many ways, but in particular in terms of funding and human resource expertise, in addition to the considerable amount of media attention generated. The country – government and the National Society included – was clearly not prepared for a disaster

of the scale and magnitude of Hurricane Dorian: even a lesser tropical storm, however, would have also caused havoc and loss of life. No systems were in place for the National Society to deal with this.

That said, and to the BRCS' credit given that it was at the time undergoing some internal organisational changes, it was quick to get on its feet and contribute as best it could towards supporting government and some of the affected people. The international response was significant – most people spoken with during this RTE suggested/agreed that it was in fact excessive to the immediate needs of people.

While the response in general was well-co-ordinated at a high level, there were clear gaps in integration at the programme and activity level. This was due in large part to the scale of Cash Voucher Assistance provided and to the lack of preparedness and attention to detail which accompanied much of this particular initiative. Notwithstanding the large presence of international delegates, several critical gaps were noted in the available person power, several of which were critical to an operation such as this.

Several key questions need to be asked in relation to the scale of this operation. At the same time, even given that this is a sensitive subject in The Bahamas, the Movement needs to reflect on whether sufficient attention was drawn to the plight and situation of so many undocumented Haitian migrants. While good relations were seemingly maintained with government around this topic – the BRCS was never told it could not support their people – was sufficient done to protect the rights and dignity of those affected?

Looking forward, there is a clear – though ambitious – vision for change and improvement towards the positioning of the National Society as the number one humanitarian organisation in the Bahamas and a major actor in the wider Caribbean. This is a credible goal and is merited given the recent, repeated tropical storms that have impacted different parts of the territory. Similar disasters should not be discounted in the future. Much can be learned from this response and recovery programme – by the BRCS as well as other parts of the Movement – and learning should be shared widely with others in the region.

ANNEX I TERMS OF REFERENCE

REAL TIME EVALUATION (RTE) FOR THE RESPONSE TO HURRICANE DORIAN IN THE BAHAMAS

1. SUMMARY

- a) **Purpose:** This RTE will ascertain the effect and efficiency of the support provided to the Bahamas Red Cross Society's (BRCS) response to Hurricane Dorian by evaluating IFRC Secretariat operational support, National Society operational capacity in its auxiliary role of public authorities and the resource mobilization and allocation of this operation. The outcome will contribute to organizational learning for the IFRC and its member National Societies, the BRCS and other Movement partners in responding to disasters in small Island state context and inform concise recommendations and strategies to improve the coordination and management in the immediate and medium terms; as well as to support the delivery of quality humanitarian assistance to the affected communities in the Bahamas, as well as other small island/middle income States.
- b) **Audience:** This RTE will be used by the IFRC and its member National Societies, the BRCS and other Movement partners in Bahamas, the IFRC County Cluster Support Team (CCST), the Americas Regional Office and by Headquarters in Geneva. The final report and its management response will also be made available to RC/RC stakeholders and external partners involved in the Bahamas response via the IFRC Evaluation Databank.
- c) **Commissioners:** This RTE has been commissioned by the IFRC Regional Director for Americas and the USG, Programmes and Operations Division in Geneva
- d) **Reports to:** The RTE team leader will report to a 5-person evaluation management team (EMT) comprised of one representative from the CCST, Regional and Geneva levels of the Secretariat (2 DCPRR, 2 PMER).
- e) **Duration:** Up to 40 working days, with up to 10 - 15 of these in the field.
- f) **Timeframe:** Between December 2019 – end March 2020.
- g) **Location:** Bahamas, Panama and Geneva.

2. BACKGROUND

On 1 September 2019, Hurricane Dorian hit the Northern Bahamas with winds of up to 298 km/h reaching Category 5 on the Saffir-Simpson scale. The storm battered Abaco Island and Grand Bahama for almost two days in what has been described as a stationary hurricane. The Bahamas is composed of 700 islands distributed over 100,000 square miles of ocean. Hurricane Dorian significantly impacted the north-western Bahamas islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama and the surrounding Keys. Hurricane Dorian surpassed known meteorological records as the strongest Atlantic hurricane documented to directly impact a land mass since records began. The hurricane also affected the north-western Bahamas islands for an approximate total of 68 hours, with the southern eyewall planted over Grand Bahama for about 30 hours. Abaco Islands were the most severely affected. Assessments for Abaco found widespread destruction, with thousands of houses levelled, telecommunications towers destroyed, and water wells and roads damaged. Satellite data suggests that in Central Abaco, destroyed buildings are concentrated in the area surrounding Marsh Harbour, the most ravaged, particularly The Pea and The Mudd – both mostly inhabited by vulnerable groups – and Scotland Cay. In Grand Bahama, the central and eastern parts were the most impacted, with hundreds of homes damaged between Freeport and Deep Water Cay. Satellite data suggests that 76 to 100 per cent of buildings analysed near High Rock (central Grand Bahama), McLeans Town and Deep Water Cay (eastern Grand Bahama) have been destroyed. According to the Department of Social Services (DOSS),

there were 777 sheltered people in 5 official shelters in New Providence as of 28th of October, in Grand Bahama and Abaco, official collective shelters have been deactivated due to lack of use. Some evacuees sought shelter with relatives and friends across The Bahamas. According to the DOSS, 15000 people are affected from which 4800 are displaced, 346 people are still missing, and the death count has increased to 65 (as of 21 October 2019).

The population affected by the disaster includes Bahamian citizens from Grand Bahamas and Abaco and many people of Haitian descent residing in Bahamas. While some of this segment of the displaced population are regularized and reside under work permits, many are present in Bahamas without immigration status, have missing documentation or could be stateless, making them particularly vulnerable in the aftermath of the Hurricane.

The IFRC launched its Emergency Appeal for the Bahamas response on 03 September, subsequently revised it on 24 September to CHF 17 million and a second revision was issued on 6 of November to CHF 26.2 million, to assist 2500 families affected by the hurricane and subsequent flooding³⁷. Closing the third month of the operation³⁸ a total of 9,465 households have received relief assistance (including shelter tool kits, stove kits, tarps, kitchen sets, blankets, jerry cans, etc.) and 1096 households received multipurpose grant. In addition, more than 6,000 have been reached with epidemic prevention messages and hygiene promotion.

The overall strategy of BRCS and IFRC operation is two-fold: to meet the immediate needs of affected people, as well as to enhance the affected communities' capacity to prepare for and respond to future disasters while supporting their recovery process. The plan is constructed based on two phases, which are expected to overlap to some extent: the emergency relief phase and the recovery phase. A rapid transition will be ensured between both phases. All actions are focusing on covering urgent needs and planning for the recovery actions to strengthen the resilience of the affected families. The IFRC has now deployed a recovery assessment team to develop the recovery strategy and to identify the next steps to be taken during this important stage. This assessment will inform a comprehensive revision of the Plan of Action.

3. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The IFRC is conducting this RTE because of its commitment to the people being assisted and in improving the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the evolving response. This RTE will ascertain the effect and efficiency of the support provided to the Bahamas Red Cross Society's (BRCS) response to Hurricane Dorian by evaluating IFRC Secretariat operational support, National Society operational capacity in its auxiliary role of public authorities and the resource mobilization and allocation of this operation. The RTE will draw on current best practices in the three areas (what is working well) as well as identify what requires improvements, taking into consideration the context and capacities of the IFRC and its member National Societies, the BRCS and other Movement partners. It is anticipated that this RTE will identify challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt for the Red Cross to operate and respond to disasters in small island/middle income States context where there is minimal presence of other humanitarian actors

³⁷ For more information and details on the Bahamas Hurricane Dorian Emergency Appeal (including latest Operations Update) please consult IFRC webpage and Go Platform.

³⁸ Figures as of 24 November 2019.

In the Bahamas, the RTE will focus on 1 to 2 surrounding areas, as well as the capital, Nassau, although this will depend upon the time availability and the access to those areas. ToR RTE Bahamas Hurricane Dorian

4. EVALUATION KEY QUESTIONS

The RTE will focus on the following key areas and questions. **The list of questions is not exhaustive, and the team should use them as a guide and adapt them to the situation on the ground as needed:**

4.1 IFRC Secretariat Operational Support

- Considering the size and capacity of the National Society to respond to the impact of such disaster, what have been the opportunities, challenges and impact of the surge deployments in this operation and the capacity of the NS to ensure the sustainability of the intervention?
- How has the process of HR planning – for medium-term solutions (6-12 months) – been undertaken, i.e. including development of job descriptions and classification, recruitment, contracting, medical clearance, and deployment (including induction briefing/training, and duty of care)? Was the recruitment process for long term staff efficient and able to establish the correct profiles in time for a full handover from the surge staff rotations?
- To what extent have the IFRC finance policies and procedures allowed a smooth implementation of the emergency operation activities (looking at the practices, barriers and risks related to cash flow, liquidity and money transfer to NS, working advance liquidation, thresholds, opening of bank accounts, cash disbursement as part of CTP modality, real time budget follow up, tracking of expenditures, flexibility of IFRC procedures)? What were the major financial risks?
- Has the IFRC procurement and supply chain management processes been adequate to meet the evolving needs and intended outcomes of the operation? Considering Bahamas is a middle-income country, is the IFRC standard list of items distributed in line with the needs of targeted population? What are the major constraints faced in logistics in such an operating environment?
- How has operational supply chain management and related support functions affected logistics services (transit time, customs clearance, warehousing spaces, and fleet management, procedures), procurement and the timeliness of humanitarian assistance? Identify any gaps and bottlenecks and provide recommendations to improve on the process.
- Is the ongoing and proposed logistics structure, including the Logistics and Basecamp ERU's support appropriate and sufficient to allow for response and recovery planning.
- What kind of data management systems exist for this operation? How are they being used to ensure systematic verification and validation of data and identification of gaps to inform relevant stakeholders?
- What have been the contributions and/or challenges, if any of the audit functions (including one PNS) established?
- To what extent has the design and implementation of the operation considered aspects of Green Response³⁹?

National Society Operational Capacity

- What are the main opportunities and challenges the BRCS and IFRC faces in this emergency operation?
- How much has the operation contributed to strengthen BRCS auxiliary role and what potential can still be explored?
- What systems have been put into place to recruit, manage and train current and spontaneous volunteers working for the emergency operation? Are the current volunteering levels and

³⁹ Please refer to the IFRC Green Response snapshot for more information.

competencies/skill sets appropriate for delivering the immediate- and medium-term objectives of the operation? Any recommendations on how to ensure an effective and sustainable volunteer system?

- What are the prospects of the BRCS to come out as a stronger NS from this operation considering the tremendous financial resources available?
- How effectively has the BRCS and IFRC coordinated with external actors, particularly the Governmental agencies (including NEMA, Military bodies); sub regional system -CDEMA-, UN, and international and national humanitarian community?
- To what extent did the intervention complement or duplicate efforts of other actors including government? How was this addressed?
- What are the existing partnerships for IFRC and the National Society in this operation? What were the role of these partnerships in supporting an efficient and effective emergency response operation before and after Hurricane Dorian?
- To what extent were the Principles and Rules for Red Cross Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance respected and implemented? What did IFRC and BRCS need in terms of practical support to allow for humanitarian aid coordination?

Resource mobilisation

- What was the response to this emergency operation, considering the scale and visibility of the crisis? How effectively has the IFRC and BRCS coordinated with donors to mobilize resources?
- How have contributions (earmarked and unearmarked) and donations (including in kind) impacted the operation and its cost-effectiveness? To what extent have these contributions adhered to the IFRC logistics standards and the Principles and Rules for Red Cross Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance?
- What is the capacity of the National Society to absorb and manage resources being delivered/mobilized for this operation? What sectors and services are being affected, and how has this influenced the emergency operation? Are there mitigating measures and/or alternatives which should be considered?
- To what extent did/does IFRC's RM strategy and regular financial analysis and monitoring influence the funds received for this operation to ensure there were used efficiently and in line with the needs of the target population in the Bahamas?

Wider risks and challenges

- Taking a snapshot of the situation in Bahamas, what are the most serious risks or challenges facing the operation?
- To what extent have these critical gaps already been identified and addressed in a timely way?
- What gaps or bottlenecks remain? Are there plans in place to address these or are these still areas that need to be addressed?
- What compliance systems are in place and how well are they working?
- How well has the IFRC Secretariat anticipated risks to the NS and what risk mitigation strategies have been put in place?
- What are the possible legal concerns around HR and logistics that may impact on sustaining the operation?
- What are the risks and/or opportunities, if any of the extensive funding of external partners to the BRCS and response operation?
- Any lessons learned or recommendations for the different actors in this operation to allow for better preparation and response to disasters of such an extent in middle income small island country contexts?

5. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The team will carry out the RTE through a series of approaches, including:

- Secondary data analysis (Emergency Appeals, Operation Updates, in-country documents, mission reports, debriefs, etc).
- Key informant interviews with key RCRC and external stakeholders in country and for those who have recently left the operation; and at CCST, Regional and Geneva levels, including interviews with key delegates involved in the earlier stages of the response.
- Meetings and focus group discussions with RCRC and external actors, including BRCS volunteers, PNS in-country, etc. The RTE should aim at engaging with community groups.
- An online survey could also be considered for key delegates who have left the operation if found useful.

The RTE team will present its preliminary findings to the IFRC in-country team in Bahamas before departure, the Americas Regional Office and Geneva Headquarters, through a participatory meeting and/or virtual workshop.

An Evaluation Management Team will also be set up to manage and support the RTE. It will comprise of a five-person evaluation management team (EMT) comprised of one representative from the CCST, Regional and Geneva levels of the Secretariat (2 DCPRR, 2 PMER). The EMT will support the RTE process, as required. It will be responsible for supporting and overseeing the evaluation process up to the finalization of the final evaluation report.

6. EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The RTE team will deliver the following:

Inception Report – The inception report will iterate the parameters and the workplan to operationalise and direct each aspect of the evaluation and data collection plan, including the tools and methods to be employed.

The Inception Report will elaborate on these terms of reference by:

- agreeing on specific evaluation questions;
- describing how the evaluation and data collection will be carried out;
- refining and specifying the expectations;
- detailing the methodology;
- drafting data collection tools (interview guides, guidance for the FGDs, etc);
- reviewing conclusions of other RTEs conducted in small Island State context (Vanuatu, Fiji, etc);
- clarifying roles and responsibilities of the team; and
- outlining the timeframe and activities for the evaluation.

The inception report should outline the structure of the report to be submitted by the consultant; and include consultant's expectations as to what extent the purpose of the evaluation can be achieved.

Debriefings / feedback to management at all levels – The team will present its preliminary findings to relevant stakeholders before leaving the country, as well as the Americas Regional Office and Geneva Headquarters in a participatory meeting or virtual workshop. This will allow all three levels to take on board any pertinent comments and/or to make any corrections or additions to the findings, as required before the finalization of the report.

Draft report – A draft report, identifying key findings, lessons learned and recommendations for the current and future operation, will be submitted within one week of the team's return from the field.

Final report – The final report will contain a short executive summary (no more than 1,000 words) and a main body of the report (expected to be no more than 10,000 words) covering the background of the intervention evaluated, a description of the evaluation methods and limitations, findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations. Recommendations should be specific, feasible and evidence-based. It will contain appropriate appendices, including a copy of the ToR, cited resources or bibliography, a list of those interviewed, and any other relevant materials.

The final report will be submitted one week after the receipt of comments on the draft report and will have to be validated by the Commissioners (Regional Director Americas and USG Programmes & Operations). Once validated, the final report and the Management Response will be shared with IFRC senior management, wider IFRC and Movement stakeholders and will be posted on the IFRC Evaluation Databank.

7. EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

Indicative timetable for the RTE process

Hiring of the Evaluation team	End December to mid-January	
Desk Review and study of documents	End January	4 days
Inception report	End January	2 days
Data collection including findings workshops	February	Geneva (3 days) Panama (5 days) Bahamas (6 days)
Data analysis	Beginning March	3 days
Draft report	Mid-March	5 days
Final report	End March to beginning April	5 days

ANNEX II ITINERARY FOR THIS REAL TIME EVALUATION

20 January	Team Leader identified and notified by IFRC
4 February	Team Leader travel to Geneva
5 February	Internal meetings between RTE Team (part) and IFRC staff
6 February	Internal meetings between RTE Team (part) and IFRC staff
7 February	Internal meetings between RTE Team (part) and IFRC staff
8 February	Travel to Panama
9 February	Team working session, Panama
10 February	Meetings with Americas Regional Office, Panama
11 February	Meetings with Americas Regional Office, Panama
12 February	Meetings with Americas Regional Office, Panama
13 February	Meetings with Americas Regional Office, Panama
14 February	Initial debriefing, Panama. Data analysis and preparation for next phase of work
15 February	RTE Team travels to Nassau, The Bahamas
16 February	Data analysis and consolidation
17 February	Meetings with BRCS, Nassau
18 February	Meetings with BRCS, Nassau; Some team members travel to Grand Bahama
19 February	Some team members travel to Abaco; Consultations with BRCS Nassau
20 February	Fieldwork (Abaco) and meetings (Nassau)
21 February	Debriefing with BRCS and others, Nassau; Data consolidation and verification
22 February	RTE Team international travel
26 May	Online presentation by the RTE team, as part of the Virtual Red Cross Pre-Hurricane Conference 2020.

ANNEX III. PEOPLE MET OR CONSULTED AS PART OF THIS EVALUATION

Note: the following lists do not include individual volunteers, recipients of disaster relief or cash, or other individuals spoken with as part of this RTE to protect their identities.

NAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION	LOCATION
IFRC SECRETARIAT, GENEVA			
Nelson Castano	Manager, Operations Co-ordination	IFRC	Geneva
Miki Tsukamoto	Co-ordinator, Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, Strategy and Knowledge Department	IFRC	Geneva
Jono Anzalone	Head of Disaster and Crisis, Prevention, Response, and Recovery	IFRC	ARO, Panama
Antoine Belair	Senior Officer, Operations Co-ordination - Response and Recovery (Americas and Europe)	IFRC	Geneva
Marta Pena	Shelter Focal Point for the Americas	IFRC	Geneva
Pablo Medina	Shelter Cluster Co-ordinator	IFRC	Geneva
Marjorie Soto Franco	Senior Officer, National Societies Preparedness Disaster and Crisis Prevention	IFRC	Geneva
Giorgio Ferrario	NSDV Unit Manager	IFRC	Geneva
Lucia Lasso	Surge Focal Point for the Americas	IFRC	Geneva
Thierry Balloy	Director LPSCM	IFRC	Geneva
Diana Ongiti	Senior Officer Emergency Appeals	IFRC	Geneva
Andre Caria	Audit and Investigation	IFRC	Geneva
Luke Caley	Information Management	IFRC	Geneva
Misgana Ghebreberman	Livelihoods Officer	IFRC	Geneva
Alice Fahy	Human Resources	IFRC	Geneva
Adjmal Dullo	Volunteering Co-ordinator	IFRC	Geneva
HanGoo Lee	Global Cash Officer	IFRC	Geneva
PANAMA CITY			
Walter Cotte	ARO Director	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Steve McAndrew	Deputy Regional Director	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Ariel Kestens	Head of CSST	IFRC	CCST, Port of Spain
Cheryl Lewis	Senior Officer, PMER	IFRC	Port of Spain, Trinidad
Mauricio Bustamante	Head of Logistics	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Stephany Murillo	Manager Logistics	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Maria Tallarico	Head of Health and Care	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Iris Amlanza	Senior Finance Analyst	IFRC	ARO, Panama City

Omar Robinson	WASH Co-ordinator	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Maia Techera	Senior Officer, PMER	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Luis Fanovich	Senior Officer, information	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Daniel Arango	DM Co-ordinator	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Diana Medina	Regional Communications Manager	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Jorge Asprilla	Head of Finance and Administration	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Andres Morales	Regional Co-ordinator, Volunteering and Youth Development	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Felipe Delcid	Continental Operations Co-ordinator	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Sandra Romero	Partnerships and Resource Development Unit	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Marion Andrivet	Senior Officer – Emergency Appeals and Marketing, Partnerships and Resource Development Unit	IFRC	ARO, Panama City
Noel Sampson	European Commission, Field Expert for the Caribbean Region	ECHO	Panama City
THE BAHAMAS			
Mrs Terez Curry	President	BRCS	Nassau
Sean Brennen	Director-General	BRCS	Nassau
Mrs Brendalee Rolle	Deputy Director-General	BRCS	Nassau
Baylor Talibov	Operations Manager	IFRC	Nassau
James Bellamy	<u>Deputy Operations Manager</u>	IFRC	Nassau
Priscila Gonzales	PMER	IFRC	Nassau
Xavier Genot	Shelter Cluster Co-ordinator	IFRC	Nassau
Harold Brooks	<u>harold.brooks@me.com</u>	IFRC	
Al Panico	<u>American Red Cross Field Representative</u>	American Red Cross	Nassau
Matt Baden	Case Manager	IFRC	Nassau
Camille Coubeax	Information Management	IFRC	Nassau
Ana Maria Escobar	Information Management	IFRC	Nassau
Kyla Munnings	Procurement Officer	IFRC	Nassau
Laurence Smith	Fleet Manager	IFRC	Nassau
Nigel Gray	Warehouse	IFRC	Nassau
Margareta Ottoson	IFRC National Society Development Liaison	IFRC	Nassau
Janice Mackey	Human Resources Admin/Log	BRCS	Nassau
Patrice Francis	BRCS Case Management	BRCS	Nassau
Roxana Trigo	CVA Coordinator	IFRC	Nassau
Brandon	Encashment Delegate	IFRC	Nassau

Denisse Solis	Emergency Shelter Senior Officer America's Regional Office	IFRC	Nassau
Laxman Chhetry	Senior Shelter and Construction Co-ordinator	IFRC	Nassau
Nayib Santana	HR in Emergencies	IFRC	Nassau
Viola Knowles	BRCS Fundraising Officer	BRCS	Nassau
Dr Bernardette Saunders	PSS	BRCS	Nassau
Amanda Lewis-Adderley	Programmes and Operations Manager	American Red Cross	Nassau
Renaldi Forbes	Chairman	BRCS	Grand Bahama
Misty Adderly	Operations Officer	BRCS	Grand Bahama
Annie Beckles	Shelter Rental Assistant	BRCS	Grand Bahama
Shonte Rolle	Shelter Repairs Assistant	BRCS	Grand Bahama
Carter Stone	Team Leader	IFRC	Abaco
Orri Gunnarsson	WASH and Shelter Co-ordinator	Icelandic Red Cross	Abaco
Ívar Schram	CEA Delegate	Icelandic Red Cross	Abaco
Christine Lightbourn	BRCS, Abaco President		Abaco
Lauren Riviere	BRCS, Abaco Centre		Abaco
Paul Pinder	USAID/OFRA/BRCS		Abaco
Ken Hutton	Abaco Chamber of Commerce/DRA		Abaco
Brad Kauffman	WASH, Samitarans Purse		Abaco
Zack McClelland	Samitarans Purse		Abaco
John Kimbrough	USAID/OFDA		Abaco
Berryl Armbrister	USAID/OFDA		Abaco
Ann Jean Baptiste	USAID/OFDA		Abaco
Nelson Bosch	IOM		Abaco
Tiffany Haug	Team Leader, Project Hope		Abaco
Jana Stone	Open World Relief		Abaco
ONLINE SURVEY/OTHER IDEPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS			
Cate Bird	Missing Persons and Forensics Advisor. ICRC, Regional Delegation for the USA and Canada		
Lilia Blades Martinez	IFRC Shelter Cluster Americas		
Raphael Hamoir	IFRC, Dominican Republic		
Nayib Santana	IFRC		
Roxana Trigo	IFRC		
Evodie Vilus	IFRC		
Mike Janssens	IFRC, Nassau		
Emmanuel Pajot			
Arshad Mandol			
Dragan Luksija			
Zubair Siddiqui			
Marko Korhonen	Finnish Red Cross		
Roger Alonso	IFRC		
Roger Morgui			

David Campfens	Canadian Red Cross, Switzerland
Richard Clair	Canadian Red Cross
Lai-Ling Lee	Canadian Red Cross
Olta Ndoja	Danish Red Cross
Matthew Marek	American Red Cross, USA

ANNEX IV. EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS

The evaluation team consisted of three people – an external evaluator and team leader (David Stone), a Director-General from a National Society (Grenada Red Cross – Ms Kathy-Ann Morain) and a Senior Officer, Information Management, from the IFRC Secretariat (Mununuri Musori).

The external evaluator provided an independent, objective perspective as well as technical experience on evaluations, and was the main author of the evaluation report. None of the three evaluators have a vested interest in the IFRC operation being evaluated in The Bahamas. Brief biographies for each team member are presented below.

Kathy-Ann R Morain is Director General of the Grenada Red Cross Society and has more than 13 years' experience as a trainer, with proven abilities as a facilitator in the field of Disaster Management. Over the past eight years, Kathy-Ann has served in several positions, which has enabled her to further enhance her training, facilitation and co-ordination skills. She has strong analytical and leadership skills and experience in assessing gaps in community capacity for disaster preparedness and tailoring programmes to address the needs of vulnerable communities.

Mununuri Musori is a Senior Officer, Information Management – Planning and Reporting at the IFRC Secretariat in Geneva. He has over 16 years of experience working on PME and data-driven initiatives in the Secretariat, with practical experience in Africa and the Americas and is well versed in mobile data collection, statistical analysis and data visualisation tools.

David Stone has 30 years of experience in project development, management and evaluations, with emphasis on the links between community empowerment and welfare, livelihoods and resilience building, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and environmental management. His work experience spans more than 40 countries in Africa and Asia, specialising over the past 20 years on conflict- and disaster-prone situations. David has a track record of working in the NGO world – supporting both national and international organisations – but has also engaged extensively with a range of UN agencies, donors and the private sector. His record shows his strengths as a team leader and team player, with additional skills in the areas of managing organisational change, applying evidence-based learning, developing long-range strategies and building staff capacity.

ANNEX V TOPLINE EVALUATION GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. KII - SENIOR MANAGEMENT	
Code:	Date:
Participant: Interviewer: Note taker:	Location:
<p>We are carrying out a real time evaluation of the Bahamas operation to inform the next phase of programming and learn from this response. IN this regard, we would like to ask you some questions if you agree. Thank you.</p>	
<p>Introduction/Background</p> <p>Tell us about role in this operation including your position, areas of responsibility, reporting lines, etc</p>	
<p>Challenges and Opportunities</p> <p>What were the main opportunities and challenges the BRCS and IFRC faced in this emergency operation?</p> <p>At the time of the emergency what were the main gaps identified in BRCS's capacity and how were these addressed?</p> <p>To what extent were the Principles and Rules for Red Cross Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance respected and implemented?</p> <p>What did IFRC and BRCS need in terms of practical support to allow for humanitarian aid co-ordination?</p> <p>What has been the role of the CCST (Port of Spain) in this emergency response (as agreed in the IFRC Secretariat Emergency Response Framework)?</p> <p>Has this operation contributed to strengthening BRCS's role and capacity – if so? What potential can still be explored?</p> <p>What are the prospects of the BRCS to come out as a stronger NS from this operation considering the financial resources and technical support services made available?</p>	
<p>Co-ordination – Internal and External</p> <p>Please describe the overall co-ordination between BRCS, the IFRC and the CCTS (Port of Spain)? Was this effective? What worked well and what could have been done better?</p> <p>Please describe the overall co-ordination between BRCS and other National Societies? Was this effective? What worked well and what could have been done better?</p>	

<p>Please describe your co-ordination with the CCTS Port of Spain)?</p> <p>Who were some of the main on-the-ground partners for BRCS and IFRC in this operation?</p> <p>What was the role of these partnerships in supporting an efficient and effective emergency response operation before and after Hurricane Dorian?</p> <p>How effectively has the BRCS and IFRC co-ordinated with external actors, particularly government agencies, including the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), NEMA, Military bodies, Disaster Reconstruction Authority (DRA), CDEMA</p>	
<p><i>Risks and Challenges</i></p> <p>Taking a snapshot of the situation in Bahamas, what are the most serious risks or challenges still facing the operation?</p> <p>To what extent have these critical gaps already been identified and addressed in a timely way?</p> <p>What gaps or bottle necks remain? Are there plans in place to address these or are these still areas that need to be addressed?</p> <p>What compliance systems are in place and how well are they working?</p> <p>How well has the IFRC Secretariat anticipated risks to the BRCS and what risk mitigation strategies have been put in place?</p>	
<p><i>Appropriateness</i></p> <p>Were you kept sufficiently informed of progress/challenges by the IFRC? Other National Societies?</p> <p>Was the support provided relevant and in a timely manner? What has been learned from subsequent post-distribution monitoring?</p>	
<p><i>Cross Cutting issues</i></p> <p>What actions have been taken in relation to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protection, including for unregistered people affected by Dorian? 2. Effective Community Engagement and Accountability? 3. Psychosocial support/trauma healing? 	
<p><i>Recommendations/Learning</i></p> <p>What actions have been set in place to guide transition to recovery? Challenges and opportunities?</p> <p>What are some of the main lessons you have learned from this response?</p> <p>What recommendations might you make following your experience with this response?</p> <p>Anything else you would like to share with us?</p>	

2. KII - MANAGEMENT	
Code:	Date:
Participant: Interviewer: Note taker:	Location:
We are carrying out a real time evaluation of the Bahamas operation to inform the next phase of programming and learn from this response. In this regard, we would like to ask you some questions if you agree. Thank you.	
Introduction/Background Tell us about role in this operation including your position, areas of responsibility, reporting lines What has been IFRC support? Over time?	
NS Preparedness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the country prepared for Hurricane Dorian? • Was the BRCS prepared? If so, how? When did preparedness for Dorian begin? • How was it tracked? • Was prior contact established with ARO/CCST/Secretariat about preparedness, e.g. the Hurricane Season Contingency Plan? • If so, when did this start to happen and what were the necessary systems and procedures to deal with a large-scale emergency in place and known to everyone? 	
NS Challenges and Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the main opportunities and challenges the BRCS and IFRC faced in this emergency operation? • At the time of the emergency what were the main gaps identified in BRCS's capacity and how were these addressed? • To what extent were the Principles and Rules for Red Cross Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance respected and implemented? • What did IFRC and BRCS need in terms of practical support to allow for humanitarian aid co-ordination? • Has this operation contributed to strengthening BRCS's role and capacity – if so how? What potential can still be explored? 	
Communication & Co-ordination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were communications between BRCS and the IFRC and other National Societies / Americas Regional Office open, clear and constructive? Could this have been improved? Any lessons from this? • Who were some of the main on-the-ground partners for BRCS and IFRC in this operation? • What was the role of these partnerships in supporting an efficient and effective emergency response operation before and after Hurricane Dorian? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effectively has the BRCS and IFRC co-ordinated with external actors, particularly government agencies, including the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), NEMA, Military bodies, Disaster Reconstruction Authority (DRA), CDEMA? • What was/is the extent of co-ordination between BRCS, ARO, IFRC with other affected countries – “One Plan”? • What is the current status of the national Disaster Law – National regulations and law? • How does the response/recovery strategy relate to this and other government programmes? 	
<p><i>Cross-cutting issues</i></p> <p>What actions have been taken in relation to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protection, including for unregistered people affected by Dorian? b) CEA? c) PGI? d) Restoring family links/tracing requests – also for unregistered people? e) Psychosocial support/trauma healing? f) Ecosystem-based adaptation? <p>What actions have been set in place to guide transition to recovery?</p> <p>Challenges and opportunities?</p>	
<p><i>Recommendations/Learning</i></p> <p>What are some of the main lessons you have learned from this response?</p> <p>What recommendations might you make following your experience with this response?</p> <p>Anything else you would like to share with us?</p>	

3. KII - TECHNICAL STAFF	
<i>Code:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Participant:</i> <i>Interviewer:</i> <i>Note taker:</i>	<i>Location:</i>
<p>We are carrying out a real time evaluation of the Bahamas operation to inform the next phase of programming and learn from this response. In this regard, we would like to ask you some questions if you agree. Thank you.</p>	
<p><i>Introduction/Background</i></p> <p>Tell us about role in this operation including your position, areas of responsibility, reporting lines</p> <p>What has been IFRC support? Over time?</p>	

<p>Relevance and Appropriateness</p> <p>Are the current objectives of the appeal in line with the needs of the vulnerable population?</p> <p>Do you believe enough consideration was given to determining priority needs of the most affected people? Could more have been done to tailor support to affected people?</p> <p>Early situational and needs assessments – were they focused, detailed enough and used in the subsequent response?</p> <p>What actions/sectors were at the core of the relief operation to affected communities?</p> <p>Were you kept sufficiently informed of progress/challenges by the IFRC? Other National Societies?</p>	
<p>Coverage</p> <p>Do you work with the most vulnerable people? How? What is your perception on the coverage of the most affected areas/islands? Does this appeal cover the most vulnerable proportionally?</p>	
<p>Effectiveness</p> <p>Any key challenges/ successes from the appeal?</p> <p>Was the BRCS prepared to effectively respond? If so, how?</p> <p>When did preparedness for Dorian begin? How was it tracked?</p> <p>Were the necessary systems and procedures to deal with a large-scale emergency in place and known to everyone?</p> <p>What were your criteria for quality? Who are you guided by? How do you guide the branch/ volunteers?</p> <p>What data do you collect? How do you use this? (qualitative; PDMs; programme documents to share)?</p> <p>How is information shared amongst different stakeholders to avoid duplications/efficient use of resources?</p>	
<p>Movement and Interagency Co-ordination</p> <p>How do you co-ordinate with internal and external partners?</p> <p>Were appropriate complaint mechanisms put in place? Please describe? How effective would you say these have been?</p>	

<p>Were communications between BRCS and the IFRC and other National Societies / Americas Regional Office open, clear and constructive? Could this have been improved? Any lessons from this?</p> <p>What was/is the extent of co-ordination between BRCS, ARO, IFRC with other affected countries – “One Plan”?</p>	
<p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes – positive and negative have resulted directly from this response? • What, if anything, could have been done to secure a greater impact from the resources available? • What will be the social impacts of this intervention in the long-term? • What will be the environmental impacts of this intervention in the long-term and could they have been mitigated in the design of this operation? <p>Institutional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the best practices that have been applied in this response? Why do these stand out from others? • At any stage of this response was there a need to redesign an approach or activity to respond better to a particular need? • How effective were communication mechanisms put in place to interact with the target groups? 	
<p>Sustainability and Connectedness</p> <p>Was sustainability built into the design of interventions in the applied sectors? Please describe.</p> <p>What trainings have you received? How useful how these been?</p> <p>Retention strategies for staff/ volunteers?</p> <p>Do you have an IFRC counterpart? How do you work together?</p>	
<p>Cross-cutting issues</p> <p>What actions have been taken in relation to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protection, including for unregistered people affected by Dorian? b) CEA? c) PGI? d) Restoring family links/tracing requests – also for unregistered people? e) Psychosocial support/trauma healing? f) Ecosystem-based adaptation? 	
<p>Recommendations/Learning</p> <p>What are some of the main lessons you have learned from this response?</p>	

What recommendations might you make following your experience with this response?	
Anything else you would like to share with us?	

4. KII – LOGISTICS (As an example)	
Code:	Date:
Participant: Interviewer: Note taker:	Location:
We are carrying out a real time evaluation of the Bahamas operation to inform the next phase of programming and learn from this response. IN this regard, we would like to ask you some questions if you agree. Thank you.	
Introduction/Background Tell us about role in this operation including your position, areas of responsibility, reporting lines.	
NS Challenges and Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the major constraints faced in logistics in this operating environment? • Did operational supply chain management and related support functions affect logistics services (transit time, customs clearance, warehousing spaces, and fleet management, procedures), procurement and the timeliness of humanitarian assistance? • What, if any, gaps and bottlenecks emerged and how were these addressed? 	
Appropriateness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the IFRC procurement and supply chain management processes been adequate to meet the evolving needs and intended outcomes of the operation? • Considering Bahamas is a middle-income country, was the IFRC standard list of items distributed in line with the needs of targeted population? • Is the ongoing and proposed logistics structure (including the Logistics and Basecamp ERU’s support) appropriate and sufficient to allow for response and recovery planning? 	
Recommendations/Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons and recommendations to improve this process in the event of another similar disaster? 	

ANNEX VI GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Challenges and Opportunities

- What were the main opportunities and challenges faced in this emergency operation?
- At the time of the emergency what were the main gaps identified in BRCS's capacity and how were these addressed?
- To what extent were the Principles and Rules for Red Cross Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance respected and implemented? What did IFRC and BRCS need in terms of practical support to allow for humanitarian aid co-ordination?
- Has this operation contributed to strengthening BRCS's role and capacity – if so How? What potential can still be explored?
- What are the prospects of the BRCS to come out as a stronger NS from this operation considering the financial resources made available?

Preparedness

- How well positioned was the BRCS for Hurricane Dorian?
- How effective and operational were exiting links with government?
- What was its previous experience in with similar events, e.g. co-ordination?
- Emergency appeal – was there sufficient clarity concerning available or anticipated funding?
- Speed of mobilisation?
- SURGE efficiency/effectiveness; SOPs understood; HR support
- Lessons learned

Co-ordination

- Please describe the overall co-ordination between BRCS and IFRC? Was this effective? What worked well and what could have been done better?
- Please describe the overall co-ordination between BRCS and other National Societies? Was this effective? What worked well and what could have been done better?
- Was prior contact established with ARO/CCST/ Secretariat about preparedness? If so when did this start to happen and what were the necessary systems and procedures to deal with a large scale emergency in place and known to everyone?
- Who were some of the main on-the-ground partners for BRCS in this operation?
- What was the role of these partnerships in supporting an efficient and effective emergency response operation before and after Hurricane Dorian?
- Were you kept sufficiently informed of progress/challenges by the IFRC? Other National Societies?
- Was the support provided relevant and in a timely manner? What has been learned from subsequent post-distribution monitoring?
- Were communications between BRCS and the IFRC and other National Societies / Americas Regional Office open, clear and constructive? Could this have been improved? Any lessons from this?
- Were other PNSs clear with the BRCS in relation to standards and rates, for example?
- How effectively has the BRCS and IFRC co-ordinated with external actors, particularly government agencies, including the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), NEMA, Military bodies, Disaster Reconstruction Authority (DRA), CDEMA, UN, and international and national humanitarian community?

- To what extent did the intervention complement or duplicate efforts of other actors including government? How was this addressed?

RECOVERY AND LESSONS

What actions have been set in place to guide transition to recovery? Challenges and opportunities?

What are some of the main lessons you have learned from this response?

What recommendations might you make following your experience with this response?

What is the Society's strategy for attracting volunteers?

Anything else you would like to share with us?

STAFF

- Was the BRCS prepared? If so, how? When did preparedness for Dorian begin? How was it tracked?
- Were the necessary systems and procedures to deal with a large scale emergency in place and known to everyone?
- Early situational and needs assessments – were they focused, detailed enough and used in the subsequent response?
- Do you believe enough consideration was given to determining priority needs of the most affected people? Could more have been done to tailor support to affected people?
- What actions/sectors were at the core of the relief operation to affected communities?
- Were you kept sufficiently informed of progress/challenges by the IFRC? Other National Societies?
- Was the support provided relevant and in a timely manner? What has been learned from subsequent post-distribution monitoring?
- Were appropriate complaint mechanisms put in place? Please describe? How effective would you say these have been?
- Were communications between BRCS and the IFRC and other National Societies / Americas Regional Office open, clear and constructive? Could this have been improved? Any lessons from this?
- What was/is the extent of co-ordination between BRCS, ARO, IFRC with other affected countries – “One Plan”?
- What is the current status of the national Disaster Law – National regulations and law?
- What actions have been taken in relation to:
 - a) Protection, including for unregistered people affected by Dorian?
 - b) CEA?
 - c) PGI?
 - d) Restoring family links/tracing requests – also for unregistered people?
 - e) Psychosocial support/trauma healing?
 - f) Ecosystem-based adaptation?

4. RESOURCE MOBILISATION

- What was the response to this emergency operation, considering the scale and visibility of the crisis?
- How effectively has the IFRC and BRCS co-ordinated with donors to mobilise resources?
- How have contributions (earmarked and unearmarked) and donations (including in kind) impacted the operation and its cost-effectiveness?
- To what extent have these contributions adhered to the IFRC logistics standards and the Principles and Rules for Red Cross Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance?
- What was the capacity of the BRCS to absorb and manage resources being delivered/mobilised for this operation?
- What sectors and services were affected, and how has this influenced the emergency operation?
- Are there mitigating measures and/or alternatives which should have been considered?
- To what extent did/does IFRC's RM strategy and regular financial analysis and monitoring influence the funds received for this operation to ensure there were used efficiently and in line with the needs of the target population in the Bahamas?

VOLUNTEERS

- Could you explain the roles played by volunteers in the immediate emergency response? And today?
- Is there an up-to-date registry of volunteers, with their contact details? How many people are registered? Try and get a table – ages, gender, etc.
- What systems have been put into place to recruit, manage and train current and spontaneous volunteers working for the emergency operation?
- Are the current volunteering levels and competencies/skill sets appropriate for delivering the immediate- and medium-term objectives of the operation?
- Any recommendations on how to ensure an effective and sustainable volunteer system?

RECOVERY AND LESSONS

What actions have been set in place to guide transition to recovery? Challenges and opportunities?

What are some of the main lessons you have learned from this response?

What recommendations might you make following your experience with this response?

Anything else you would like to share with us?

VOLUNTEERS

How long have you been a Volunteer?

What has been your experience working as a Volunteer with the BRCS? Please describe.

Have you signed the IFRC Code of Conduct? Did you understand it?

Did you receive any training from BRCS? If "Yes", what/when? Was it useful?

If you were a **Spontaneous Volunteer**, what did you do? Did you sign a Code of Conduct? Did you receive training in the Fundamental Principles? If Yes, from who? Have you had direct contact with some of the affected communities? Please describe.

Are you – and your contact details – registered in a databank by the BRCS?

Do you have Insurance through being a member of BRCS Volunteer programme?

How often do you meet with staff from BRCS?

Are communication channels between volunteers and the BRCS clear and known? What information do you receive? Do you get a response from any complaints or feedback? Are you satisfied with this?

How were you involved in the response? Please describe.

Have you requested or received any support in terms of PSS? Please describe.

communities? Please describe.

Do you have Insurance through being a member of BRCS Volunteer programme?

Did you receive regular briefings on the emergency from Red Cross officials? Please describe.

How often do you now meet with staff from BRCS?

What is the Society's strategy for attracting and retaining volunteers?

ANNEX VII GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND/OR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Confidential and non-compulsory

1. Did you receive support from the Red Cross after Hurricane Dorian? If “Yes” what support did you receive – goods, services, cash, other? [Note: check if people received more than one type of support.]
2. Did you also receive support from any other organisation or the government? If “Yes”, what did you receive and from who? For how long?
3. When did you receive the support from the Red Cross – how long after Dorian?
4. Why do you think you were selected to receive this support?
5. Within your community, do you think the selection of affected communities/people targeted the most vulnerable people and those most in need?
6. Were you consulted about the support you received ahead of time? If “Yes” who spoke with you about this?
7. Who were the main people you interacted with from the Red Cross – Volunteers, Red Cross Staff, others?
8. Was the support you received relevant to your most pressing needs? If “No” what would you have wished for instead?
9. Has the support you received been sufficient to repair your homes and make these safe?
10. Has the support you received been sufficient to help you rebuild your livelihood?
11. After the hurricane and when you were receiving support were you aware of how to register a complaint or provide feedback to the Red Cross teams providing support?
12. If “Yes” what was the system? Did you ever use this to make a complaint or provide feedback? If “Yes” what was the response you received?
13. Anything else you would like to add concerning the support provided by The Bahamas Red Cross Society?

Thank you for taking time to speak with us today. May we remind you that the information you have kindly shared with us will not be attributed to your names

ANNEX VIII ONLINE SURVEY

REAL TIME EVALUATION FOR THE RESPONSE TO HURRICANE DORIAN IN THE BAHAMAS

A REMOTE SURVEY – CONFIDENTIAL

This short survey is intended to capture feedback from people who had been specifically selected to deploy to The Bahamas prior to or following Hurricane Dorian making landfall, in addition to specialists deployed through Surge/ERU rotations. More detailed discussions will be held with selected individuals, if available.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Surname:

1.2 Other names:

1.3 E-mail contact (only to be used in case of follow-up questions/clarification):

1.4 National Society/IFRC Office/Independent Consultant:

1.5 Gender:

1.6 Are you a member of the Surge response team? Yes/No

1.7 If “Yes” how many international missions have you conducted?

1.8 In the Bahamas, how long did you spend in-country?

2. SECRETARIAT/INTERNAL CO-ORDINATION

2.1 In your opinion how would you summarise the level and quality of internal co-ordination between different departments/offices and levels of the Secretariat? Please choose one:

- a) extremely well co-ordinated
- b) sufficiently co-ordinated but room for improvement
- c) somewhat co-ordinated but considerable improvements could happen
- d) not at all co-ordinated

Explanation:

2.2 What, if anything could be improved at the level of Secretariat co-ordination to help you perform your tasks better in a similar situation?

Explanation:

3. MOVEMENT CO-ORDINATION

3.1 How did you perceive the co-ordination between the wider RCRC Movement – Bahamas Red Cross Society, Partner National Societies, the IFRC and ICRC?

- a) extremely well co-ordinated/engaged
- b) sufficiently co-ordinated /engaged but room for improvement
- c) somewhat co-ordinated/engaged but considerable improvements could happen

d) not at all co-ordinated/engaged

Explanation:

3.2 Were available Information Management tools (data systems and platforms) suitable to provide a useful overview of Movement Activities? Please choose one:

- a) Perfectly suitable
- b) Sufficiently suitable
- c) Partially suitable
- d) Not at all suitable

Explanation:

4. EXTERNAL CO-ORDINATION

4.1 How did the IFRC co-ordinate with external actors, e.g. the Cluster System, UN Agencies, government structures...) as well as the international and national humanitarian community?

- e) extremely well co-ordinated
- f) sufficiently co-ordinated but room for improvement
- g) somewhat co-ordinated but considerable improvements could happen
- h) not at all co-ordinated

Explanation:

4.2 What, if anything could be improved at this level of co-ordination in a similar situation?

Explanation:

5. SURGE DEPLOYMENTS

5.1 In your opinion, how effective was the co-ordination of the mobilisation of SURGE tools, including FACT, RDTD and ERUs?

- i) extremely well co-ordinated
- j) sufficiently co-ordinated but room for improvement
- k) somewhat co-ordinated but considerable improvements could happen
- l) not at all co-ordinated

Explanation:

5.2 How did the Surge capacity perform in addressing the needs of affected communities?

- a) Needs extremely well addressed
- b) Needs sufficiently addresses
- c) Needs somewhat addressed
- d) Needs hardly addressed

5.3 What were some of the main challenges with timing and appropriateness of deployments?
What could have been done (be done in future) to address these?

Explanation:

5.4 From your experience, was the number of Surge personnel from the Caribbean Region, with suitable language skills, appropriate?

- a) more than adequate
- b) adequate
- c) somewhat adequate
- d) not at all adequate

Explanation:

5.5 How would you rate the co-ordination between Surge (including ERU) personnel and the BRCS?

- a) excellent at all levels
- b) very good at most levels
- c) good but much room for improvement
- d) very poor in general

Explanation:

6. GENERAL

6.1 What are your thoughts on the overall co-ordination of assessments during this response?

Explanation:

6.2 Did the first deployment of an assessment cell add value to the IFRC operation?

Explanation:

6.3 What impact(s) did initial and rapid assessments have on positioning the work of the RCRC to others?

Explanation:

6.4 What are the main risks/challenges for the wider operation? How have these been addressed?

Explanation:

6.5 Do relevant risks or bottle necks remain? How are these going to be addressed – what is needed to do so?

Explanation:

6.6 What have been some of the main positive outcomes of The Bahamas operation:

-
-
-

6.7 What areas of the operation required (based on your experience) additional support/attention?

-
-
-

6.8 What, if anything could be improved at this level of co-ordination in a similar situation?

Explanation:

6.9 Any other comments you would like to share with the RTE Team?

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. Your responses and comments are very much appreciated.

ANNEX VIII GUIDING QUESTIONS ON SELECTED OECD-DAC CRITERIA

The following questions were considered by the RTE Team in interviews and during direct observations, with different audiences.

RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

- How relevant were interventions in the overall humanitarian context?
- Did this response give priority to addressing the protection needs of the affected communities?
- Were beneficiaries consulted about their priority needs before support was provided?
- Are the objectives and strategies identified realistic, appropriate and adequate to achieve the results?
- To what degree did the response specifically targeted and reached vulnerable groups like women, the elderly, the disabled and any other marginalised people?
- To what degree were participatory, accountability/complaint-feedback and cross cutting issues integrated in the various sectors of the response.
- Does the response complement/enhance or duplicate/hinder related activities carried out by other NGOs or government actors?

EFFECTIVENESS

- What progress has been achieved since this response started?
- What has been the single most strategic approach taken in this response and why?
- What, if any, approach has been the least effective and why?
- To what extent have the affected communities been reached?
- Did internal management structures ensure the effectiveness, timeliness and efficiency of the humanitarian response?
- What was the nature and quality of co-ordination with other actors?
- To what extent did BRCS have the capacity to implement emergency response actions and how were any capacity constraints addressed?
- What unexpected – positive or negative – results has this response resulted in?
- Are there attributable examples of Value for Money through Secretariat/PNS interventions with the target groups? Examples.
- What, if any, types of modality need to be adapted to be even more appropriate and conducive in future similar interventions?

EFFICIENCY

- Were the response resources used as planned? Was there any major deviation from original intended approaches/activities? Explain.
- Did response activities overlap and/or duplicate other similar interventions from other agencies/organisations?
- Are there more efficient ways of delivering more and better results with the resources that were available?
- Were the most efficient approaches used during the implementation of the activities?
- What were the main factors – including implementation approach – that influenced the efficiency and non-efficiency of the response interventions?

- What were the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the implementation process followed?
- What were some of the comparative advantages between direct implementation and working with local partners?

IMPACT

- What changes – positive and negative have resulted directly from this response?
- What, if anything, could have been done to secure a greater impact from the resources available?
- What will be the social impacts of this intervention in the long-term?
- What will be the environmental impacts of this intervention in the long-term?
- To what degree have activities in this response contributed to the overarching goal of the government's humanitarian programme?
- To what degree have activities in this response contributed to early recovery?

FINAL TOPLINE INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

- What are some of the best practices that have been applied in this response? Why do these stand out from others?
- At any stage of this response was there a need to redesign an approach or activity to respond better to a particular need?
- How effective were communication mechanisms put in place to interact with the target groups? Were these effective? Describe practices and experiences.
- What measures were taken to ensure accountability to affected communities? Describe practices and experiences.
- What specific measures were taken to mainstream gender and inclusion?
- Did the Secretariat/ARO/PNSs provide any form of support to enable BRCS to strengthen its capacity in areas of recognised weakness?
- What are some of the main Lessons Learned during the course of this response – positive and negative?
- What are some of the main recommendations you can draw from this response – positive and negative?