



International Federation of  
Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

# Learning from the Tsunami: Mid-term Review

## Findings Overview

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## List of Acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action	ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
BRR	Agency of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction for the Region and Community of Aceh and Nias	IDRL	International Disaster Response Law
CAS	Cooperation Agreement Strategies	MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
DM	Disaster Management	NS	National Society
DMIS	Disaster Management Information System	ONS	Operating National Society
DMU	Disaster Management Unit	PMI	Palang Merah Indonesia
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund	PNS	Participating National Society
ERU	Emergency Response Unit	PSR	Programme Support Recovery
FACT	Field Assessment and Coordination Team	RAT	Recovery Assessment Teams
HAPI	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership - International	RC/RC	Red Cross / Red Crescent
HR	Human Resources	RDRT	Regional Disaster Response Team
		ToR	Terms of Reference
		TRIAMS	Tsunami Recovery Impact Assessment and Monitoring System
		UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
		WHO	World Health Organisation

## Introduction

*If you are coming to this as a reader expecting just another lessons learned document that will try to raise a few issues that have been raised before and then just sit on a shelf, then STOP!!!! Put this down now. Rest assured that there is virtually no single point in this study that has not been raised before in some manner.*

*In fact it is this learning that is the real issue, so this should be our starting point. So if you're still reading, let's take this line a little further and see where it takes us.*

*Remarkable achievements have been made in assisting those affected by the Tsunami and in learning valuable lessons in the process. However, the role of this study isn't to stop at applauding these achievements – it is to look ahead and identify key lessons to take forward. Some of these lessons reflect the successes that have already been achieved; others reflect issues that may have been missed or traded off against other priorities at the time. It is important to look not just at the path that was ultimately taken but also at other paths that may have been possible along the way and that would have led to different and better outcomes.*

The Red Cross / Red Crescent (RC/RC) is incredibly adaptive. The roots of the RC/RC Movement extend more than 140 years and the RC/RC has successfully faced countless challenges over those years -- not always successfully from the first effort, but usually somehow successfully enough in the end.

Just as the RC/RC Movement has faced a vast array of significant challenges in responding to the Tsunami, so it has also adapted in countless ways to deliver solutions on the ground and in the process produced significant learning, particularly around shelter and early recovery. Collectively the RC/RC has currently developed a pool of people who understand housing, construction, livelihoods, and community engagement in ways fundamentally different from how they may have understood them before. The RC/RC is also putting in place systems to lock-in this learning and better propagate it in the future. The Federation Secretariat has established a Shelter Department, Relief Coordinator and Recovery Coordinator positions, and a more detailed concept of operational alliances as part of the ongoing development of the new operating model. National Societies themselves are also in the process of creating new units to further strengthen sectoral competencies established during the Tsunami response and to put in place appropriate support mechanisms for their bi-lateral activities in the future. The Federation Secretariat has also worked closely with National Societies to establish the Federation-wide reporting system for the Tsunami response.

Right now the RC/RC is riding a crest of learning and experience that is manifest in the thousands of RC/RC staff, volunteers, and partners that have been involved in Tsunami relief and recovery activities. Unfortunately however, many of the people currently involved in RC/RC activities are already leaving and taking that learning and experience with them, and more will certainly follow. Judging from experience with past disaster response operations, bringing the bulk of this learning forward consistently and systematically will be a considerable challenge that will require even further commitment and concerted effort.

In fact, RC/RC systems for transferring lessons between people, between organisations, and between generations have generally proven to be fairly weak. Too many times there are exercises professing to learn lessons, but in reality change often seems to happen independently of these exercises. During the course of the interviews and focus groups for this study, numerous comments were made by those interviewed that key lessons raised in the Tansley report<sup>1</sup> from 1975 or the Chambers report<sup>2</sup> from 1986 are every bit

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<sup>1</sup> 'An Agenda for the Red Cross', 1975.

<sup>2</sup> 'An independent review and evaluation of the Africa drought relief operations 1984-86 of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies', Robert Chambers, 1986.

as relevant, and every bit as yet not learned, today as they were when they were written.

What seems to be missing are not the resources and knowledge themselves (plenty of which is being developed in the Tsunami response and responses to other more recent disasters) but rather a broader ability to collectively bring these resources into play effectively throughout RC/RC systems. This would require the introduction of more committed focus to learning within the corporate culture; effective recruitment of staff with new profiles; and a new default attitude to think about the RC/RC in a broader collective sense, drawing more strongly on both local resources and resources existing more widely within the RC/RC Movement net.

Yet the real question is not necessarily what this should look like – but instead how the RC/RC can get there. Among one of the many lessons from the Tsunami response (and from previous experience as well) is that it is not possible to perfectly plan out learning and change. Maybe stronger organisations with stronger hierarchies can – maybe militaries, maybe the ICRC – but not the Federation. Yet surprisingly enough change does happen within the Federation as is evidenced in the strong RC/RC role in the establishment of the Code of Conduct; Sphere, HAPI, and ALNAP; and the Seville Agreement in the wake of experience from previous large-scale disaster responses. It is to those examples that we must look in attempting to solidify and lock-in learning gains from the Tsunami response.

This learning review draws on inputs and contributions from numerous people working with the RC/RC – in the Operating National Societies (ONS), in Participating National Societies (PNS), in the Federation Secretariat – at both field and headquarters levels.

This study is essentially a survey of lessons learned. Ultimately the real lessons need to focus more pragmatically on how RC/RC systems can be changed and improved rather than simply on descriptions of what the changes should be. The current study can hopefully serve as a starting point for prioritising lessons and form the basis for further efforts to follow-up in developing “how-to” guides for the lessons, sharing these lessons broadly throughout the RC/RC Movement, and identifying ways that various RC/RC partners can draw on these lessons and support broader change in their own activities.

To better support such follow-up, the current report is structured to present key findings and “blueprints” of suggested recommendations for the 3 core areas of fundraising, communication, and coordination within the Federation. There are certainly many other areas that are also worthy of consideration, and several of these have been captured in a fourth set of related lessons. However, ultimately further efforts will be needed to capture learning, particularly on areas more closely related to implementation and specific sectoral topics. The current study is meant to drive the consideration of the issues presented and to present a framework for ongoing dialogue around recommendations and commitments for follow-up across the Federation. In that sense the blueprints of recommendations, in particular, should be thought of as a work in progress.

## Process / methodology

Various Tsunami response evaluation studies have already been conducted and key issue areas identified. As such, this lessons-learned exercise utilised secondary data review which was supplemented by key stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions. The methodology involved facilitation of self-reflection exercises by the various partners which led to a better understanding of the emerging issues and resulted into a clear identification of preliminary recommendations for follow-up. The following methodology was used:

- 1) Secondary data review of existing Federation Tsunami response plans, evaluations and reviews as well as key existing policy documents and global Tsunami response evaluation recommendations was done.
- 2) Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were held with RC/RC partners in Indonesia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. This included Operating National Societies (ONS), Participating National Society (PNS) country delegations, and Federation Secretariat staff in both field delegations and Geneva.
- 3) Focus group discussions by PNS were also facilitated. PNS, that are currently or had been previously active in the Tsunami response and recovery, were requested to hold their own focus group discussions using the focus group protocol and guides provided by the evaluation team. For each priority area, PNS were required to provide no more than 3 to 5 pages of input, summarizing their discussions on findings and recommendations. These discussions were supplemented by findings of PNS internal evaluations and other review processes. While the Federation Secretariat Global Tsunami Evaluation team coordinated the focus group discussions with the headquarters of the PNS, similar discussions at field level within their country delegations took place and were included in the feedback report from the PNS.
- 4) Analysis: The Evaluation team then reviewed the input from the focus group and key informant interview discussions in relation to the secondary data from previous plans, reviews, and evaluations. During this process, the team synthesised the key findings regarding lessons to be learned along with sets of preliminary recommendations.
- 5) Review meeting: A review meeting will be held to discuss and validate the recommendations with a targeted group of participants from the overall exercise (PNS and ONS leadership, Federation Secretariat leadership from the field delegations and Geneva). The purpose of this meeting is to prioritise a set of key recommendations and outline related implementation mechanisms to ensure appropriate utilization of the recommendations.

## 1. Fundraising

*"People wanted money to be used to save lives, but there were not lives to be saved."*

*"We have been driven too much by the money available, ignoring what experience has taught us about recovery needs and timelines."*

The Tsunami proved an exception in many ways but particularly in the level of funding that was raised and the extent to which that funding came from public donations. While many within the RC/RC perceive both the overall level of funding and the level of public donations for the Tsunami response to be statistical outliers, more attention needs to be paid to understanding the underlying dynamics that led to this situation and the possibilities for similar dynamics to develop around future events. It is certainly likely that increases in public donations will be reflected in some degree of continued public donor support to NS for future disaster response activities, if not also knock-on support for other RC/RC activities. Just as clearly there have also been other examples of "over-funding" of RC/RC activities in response to other disasters, including the 1997 tsunami in Papua New Guinea and the September 11th 2001 attacks in the United States.

Coupled with the potential for increasing incidence of disasters across a far larger range of countries as a result of climate change, continuing urbanisation, and other trends, increases in public support to a large number of PNS mean that traditional distinctions among NS as either PNS or ONS are already being called into question. Even today, a significantly growing number of NS have some realistic possibility of operating in either mode at any given time.

So while the exact events that coalesced around the 2004 Tsunami may not be likely to repeat themselves in the near future, situations that test RC/RC capacities to respond and push the RC/RC in new directions for assistance are likely to continue to develop. In many ways this is in fact how the term "disaster" is defined at the community level – events which exceed a community's coping capacity. The RC/RC too should be prepared for the variety of "disasters" that might significantly test its own coping capacities and those of the communities around the world that it supports.

### 1.1 Stopping fundraising?

No firm consensus within the RC/RC Movement exists around the question of whether funding levels can be proactively controlled by "stopping fundraising", as was done by MSF and by some Federation members as well. This question was debated in several of the coordination conference calls among the PNS and the Federation Secretariat in the weeks after the Tsunami. At that time there was no clear consensus and there were strong requests from some PNS that the Federation Secretariat not do anything to interfere with their own fundraising activities.

In the current study most participants felt that in such an emergency the RC/RC needs to respect people's desire around the world to give money as a measure of their concern. However there were also others who thought that it is better to stop fundraising and advise donors and the public when the levels exceed programming capacity. A significant point seems to be that for the most part Federation members were not actively fundraising, so the question of "stopping" fundraising would have involved an active effort to ask members of the public not to donate any longer, something distinctly different from discretely stopping a RC/RC-led fundraising campaign.

There is broad support for establishing continuous dialogue with donors and donor education from the beginning so that the RC/RC can minimise pressure and unrealistic expectations and promote more flexible donor intent. This would also be an opportunity to make use of the RC/RC knowledge about existing conditions in the affected countries (such as the impacts of conflict in both Sri Lanka and Aceh) in framing fundraising language. Ideally this would be reflected at the time of donation by some type of 'donor certification' that if the funds exceed the amount required,

the donation can support other needs among people less directly affected by the disaster.

Stronger articulation and communication of the RC/RC values and principles will hopefully lead to better public understanding and trust of RC/RC approaches, allowing the RC/RC to better focus on not just symptomatic needs but also unmet needs and causes of vulnerability, returning to the lessons outlined in the 1984 "Prevention better than cure" report.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 Other kinds of support

Contentious discussions around fundraising have placed too much focus on support through funding to the exclusion of attention to other kinds of support. The response to the Yogyakarta earthquake built on learning from the Tsunami response to try to make fuller use of spontaneous volunteers and interest from local universities and other types of organisations to contribute to RC/RC response activities. Ultimately it is fundamental for the RC/RC to better understand that the core model on which it works is really that of transforming a wide range of donor inputs, including money but also people's time and skills, into outcomes that save lives and reduce vulnerability. It is up to the RC/RC to guide and oversee this process of transforming and adding value to donor inputs, but ultimately this process needs to respect the range of ways in which donors are ready and willing to contribute inputs to the RC/RC activities.

## 1.3 The Appeal

For the Tsunami response the appeal generally did not serve as an effective platform for integrating multiple modalities for RC/RC assistance. While a joint appeal modelled on the Federation / ICRC joint appeal in the Balkans was discussed early on, it was ruled out as unfeasible given the constraints at the time. In practice the significance of the consolidated appeal was effectively reversed, with appeal levels trailing fundraising and appeal programmes following afterwards as lists of related projects. Many felt that the appeal targets did not necessarily reflect actual needs and did not cover all needs, largely due to the time, personnel, and resource constraints under which the appeal was produced. There was a perceived lack of overall strategy to guide selection of projects included within the appeal and conjecture from a number of respondents that overall the RC/RC is doing many projects irrespective of need.

Another issue arose with the loaded nature of the word "appeal" which may have contributed to the difficulties and delays in negotiating appropriate modalities for assistance to ONS in Thailand and India in particular.

There was certainly pressure to spend that came from external sources like the media, which was sometimes ill-informed and biased toward short-term results. There were also perceptions among some RC/RC partners that there were internal pressures as well – particularly in the way that the need to strengthen support structures for the Tsunami response activities may have been used opportunistically to cover a range of core costs driving some pressure for early commitments and expenditures, against which cost shares were calculated. In addition, significant funding has been required for building and maintaining internal systems and there is a broad perception among RC/RC Movement partners that too much is being spent on internal support rather than for the beneficiaries more directly.

As commitments increased, within the Federation Secretariat the lack of a process for effectively tracking commitments within budgeting systems and delays in establishing approved budgets in the first place meant that commitments and expenditures were at best only being measured against broad appeal totals and rough estimations of income. Despite the pressures it caused, the funding crisis

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<sup>3</sup> Swedish Red Cross, 1984.

ultimately provided an opportunity to extricate Federation Secretariat in particular from some projects and commitments that may have been unnecessary or ill-advised for the RC/RC to pursue.

For the moment the appeal is seen as being too much a tool that is primarily used by the Federation Secretariat for the multi-lateral programmes it manages and not yet a joint tool that truly supports multiple modalities for a range of RC/RC partners to work together in providing assistance. The question of whether new modalities may also in fact be required is further explored in the Coordination section.

#### **1.4 Shared costs and overhead**

While shared costs and overhead (for the purposes of covering increased costs to the ONS or other RC/RC organisations) may not typically be seen as fundraising, these issues are in fact critical in looking at how resources are shared among RC/RC partners and certainly represent a significant funding stream for many RC/RC organisations.

For the Federation Secretariat the rationale for standard PSR requirements breaks down in large disasters and can lead to aggravated issues of mistrust between the Federation Secretariat and its membership, seriously impeding opportunities for collaboration in programme development and implementation. There are already efforts underway to address this issue, which should provide an agreed scale of rate in the future.

There is also much current discussion of whether shared costs and overhead should be linked to expenditures or to overall budgets. Certainly linking shared costs to expenditures may lead to too strong a focus on spending, which is perceived to have driven the pressure to spend within a number of RC/RC organisations. At the same time if shared cost levels are set against overall budgets, in situations where there is a mismatch between the planned and actual pace of implementation, the shared costs may then exceed the extent of the "shared" activities that are being covered. Overall however, far too much time and attention is collectively being spent discussing these issues. The RC/RC needs to develop a core set of models for shared costs and then move quickly to negotiate and validate a shared cost model within the Federation at country level.

On a related issue it is also clear that more attention and support needs to be given to ONS to strengthen fundraising capacities within their own organisations. In several of the countries there are ongoing plans being developed by the ONS to develop models for income generation that frankly should be viewed suspiciously in light of past experience among RC/RC partners. It would be better to focus more attention on developing potential fundraising systems. Experience elsewhere also shows that the ONS should not under-estimate potential public understanding and support as donors if appropriate mechanisms are created for channelling that support.

#### **1.5 Reporting and tracking**

Overall reporting and tracking on incoming funds, commitments and expenditures have been widely perceived as not being adequate. Certainly the "funding crisis" that the Federation Secretariat experienced for its own programme commitments has stood out for many as indicative on its own of the need for better financial management systems.

Ultimately the funding crisis has spurred the development of a more effective Federation-wide reporting process which has shown that NS are ready to contribute if the process is established in consultation with them, respects their interests and needs, and addresses the sharing of sensitive information in gradual and moderate steps. Progress has also been made in developing country level progress reports that report on RC/RC Movement contributions to the overall Tsunami response and

recovery<sup>4</sup>. This is a significant development as in the past RC/RC reporting systems have often tended to be geared toward providing feedback to government donors with only limited mechanisms to report back to the public or to the beneficiaries, leaving the RC/RC at times overly susceptible to the pressures and fluctuations in interest of the media. However there is certainly still need for further improvement, particularly in reporting back to beneficiaries and local authorities.

On the related question of earmarking, the Federation Secretariat has probably committed to too much earmarking, particularly during the effort to cover the funding crisis. However ultimately there do appear to be funding thresholds beyond which earmarking and accountability matter more. The Principles for Good Humanitarian Donorship encourage donors to minimise earmarking. For its part, RC/RC partners should try to ensure at a broader level that the RC/RC collectively is developing response and recovery strategies that are in line with donors' interests. In terms of reporting, there are ongoing efforts to work with donors to accept Federation reporting against global level targets established for the 4 goals of the Global Agenda. This would simplify reporting and enable the RC/RC to better parallel reporting by other actors on progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### 1.6 Risk management and fundraising

Risks associated with funding and fundraising have not been effectively addressed within risk management frameworks. The funding crisis certainly demonstrated that there was not enough attention given to questioning the base assumptions about multi-lateral support within the Federation and exploring other scenarios for how donor support and funding levels might develop. More generally concern about potentially adverse media attention or reactions has also driven quite conservative interpretations of donor intent within a number of RC/RC partners. There are numerous suggestions for how to manage this concern by educating donors and trying to establish clearer specification of donor intent. However RC/RC partners also need to be quite clear and confident in their own interpretation of the RC/RC mandates. Taking too conservative an approach to interpreting donor intent also raises risks of reduced programmatic impact and effectiveness, missed opportunities, and diminishment of RC/RC values and principles, particularly around equity in assistance. More resources and time should be invested in evaluating different funding risk scenarios, testing donor and public opinion through polling, and developing appropriate contingency plans.

These activities could also be useful for exploring possibilities and implications of potential new sources of funding. A number of those interviewed in the study mentioned initiatives such as the Global Humanitarian Platform and the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, through which government donors or development banks might provide support to the RC/RC system. These initiatives might offer considerable potential for additional developmental funding, yet the implications for the RC/RC should be considered carefully.

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<sup>4</sup> Examples include the annual report from Indonesia – "It takes time to recover: Tsunami Indonesia", December 2006.

## Fundraising blueprint

### □ Guidelines on fundraising

- R1. Strengthen guidelines on fundraising for the RC/RC Movement.

As shown in the early dialogue on whether to collectively stop fundraising, some PNS may perceive efforts to create new policy as interfering with their own fundraising strategies. But the development of guidelines for approaching fundraising may provide a useful resource, particularly for NS experiencing such windfall donations for the first time. This does not mean having a 'one size fits all' policy but rather developing umbrella guidance so that PNS have similar fundraising timelines with similar messages around the needs and costs. However, each NS should still be governed by its own policies as they have different needs. (Federation)

These guidelines should also include joint RC/RC commitments to media and public education campaigns to focus support on core RC/RC values and to strengthen public understanding of the relationship between vulnerability and disasters impacts. At the same time the guidelines should encourage NS to advocate for donor flexibility by promoting donor consent that their donations will assist in that particular operation to the amount deemed necessary, and that additional funds will be allocated to disasters and situations where funding is most needed. (Federation)

### □ Rationalising and standardising approaches to cost sharing

- R2. Federation Secretariat should relax PSR requirements in large disasters.
- R3. Review experience on whether shared costs should be based on all projects, on overall budgets, on expenditures, etc. Basic models should be developed and promoted as options for consideration after the disasters.

### □ Modifying the Appeal concept

- R4. Update the Appeal system, drawing on past experience with joint appeals, to better integrate the range of RC/RC partner programme interests, including both multi-lateral and bi-lateral programmes.

This should capture and mainstream approaches that were used after the funding crisis to look at how the Federation Secretariat can "sell" projects to bi-lateral partners. A significant aspect of this activity should be to explore alternative phrasings to enhance the rapid acceptance of mutual assistance by ONS. (Federation)

### □ Strengthening financial management systems:

- R5. Strengthen planning, budgeting and monitoring systems among RC/RC Movement partners, including:
- a) Strengthening mechanisms for tracking Federation-wide income in as close to real time as possible. (Federation)
  - b) Clarifying who can make commitments and at which level and develop an improved system for tracking commitments and entering them into budgets on a provisional basis in order to better manage RC/RC exposure. (Federation Secretariat)
  - c) Exploring formalising the reporting role as a "controller" for finances with Federation-wide. (Federation Secretariat and Finance Commission)

## 2. Communication

*“The Federation focuses on the most vulnerable instead of those without a voice. If the vulnerable had a voice, then they wouldn’t be vulnerable.”*

*“Our own experience was not visible to us.”*

Both NS and the Federation Secretariat are clearly under pressure from the public, the media, and Government both in their home countries and wherever they may be engaged operationally. While there is a perception that attention to the Tsunami recovery since the 2nd anniversary has diminished from its previously feverish intensity, ultimately these pressures can only be dealt with if the Federation is strong enough to defend its principles against undue pressure and involvement.

The RC/RC should be well placed among humanitarian and development organisations to understand the psychology of response, to act confidently based on experience from past learning, and to educate the media, public, and other stakeholders about the values and commitment of the RC/RC to meet response and recovery needs in the context of longer-term reduction of vulnerability and promotion of community resilience.

### 2.1 Internal communications

Shortcomings in internal communications have at times been a significant limiting factor in RC/RC service delivery. There is a lack of systems for effectively communicating across institutional boundaries between sectors; between country, regional, and headquarters levels; between country offices, etc. which significantly limits efforts to better integrate programming. There are examples of good practice (such as regularly quarterly meetings of the heads of country offices among some PNS) but they are not widespread and often due more to personal initiative or relationships rather than broader institutional commitment.

### 2.2 Maximising the RC/RC voice

There is a high value to communicating / reporting as a Federation that reinforces public perceptions of a unified RC/RC Movement. The Federation-wide reporting process has been well received and helped individual Federation members to show the value of combined RC/RC efforts. However, there is still a perception that the RC/RC needs to be better able to show the work that it does. Because this has not always happened effectively, the media has educated donors to give to specific causes rather than more general, flexible causes.

Over the course of the Tsunami response and recovery, more emphasis has been placed on external partnering, including partnering on communications with the media and with beneficiaries, and this has paid dividends in communicating core RC/RC values and commitments. Yet there has been surprisingly little combined effort among RC/RC partners to develop joint campaigns to promote key RC/RC themes and take advantage of the strong RC/RC presence that exists in the Tsunami affected areas.

### 2.3 Communicating realistic messages

Communicating realistic timeframes and consistent messages about the emergency response and recovery programmes minimises negative media publicity and unrealistic expectations. For example despite the negative media publicity that the British Red Cross experienced along the theme ‘Tsunami victims still wait for promised billions’, their investment from the beginning of the response in consistent public statements about the complexity and timeframes of construction projects has ultimately allowed them to diffuse criticism and create the necessary space for effective long-term programming. Additionally the Federation Secretariat has been working with a number of NS to develop improved tools for communication on recovery based on lessons gathered from communications staff in the course of the response to the Tsunami and other more recent disasters.

## 2.4 Engaging with communities in dialogue, planning, ...

Across the RC/RC there has been substantial operational learning about the necessity of engaging with communities about their needs, what services and resources the RC/RC can offer, and how we can effectively work together. Certainly there is much more attention now than at the start of the Tsunami response to communicating with communities, particularly in terms of providing feedback on ongoing progress and implementation. As an example the Maldives housing construction programme has seen tremendous improvement in community engagement in the programme since beginning a series of community visits to the new housing sites that are being constructed.

However, the RC/RC is still too self-referential. Community rebuilding is often portrayed as something that the RC/RC is doing rather than as something that communities do themselves – and that the RC/RC is supporting along with a host of other partners. There needs to be more focus on supporting communities' own recovery planning. Beneficiary engagement in all stages of the emergency and recovery is paramount in order to deliver relevant and sustainable interventions.

Ultimately the most effective assistance may consist of giving communities options and allowing them to choose. In this regard, significant progress has been made in the use of cash grants to give beneficiaries greater autonomy and flexibility in how they use the recovery resources being provided. Programmes like the Community Recovery and Reconstruction Partnership in Sri Lanka have also begun to look at providing community-level grants and supporting recovery activities through local Community Development Councils (also established through the programme). In Indonesia there has also been wide appreciation among partners of the empowerment, efficacy, and economies of scale in promoting 2-way communications that have been brought by the radio broadcast programmes sponsored by the Irish Red Cross. This programme has also benefited greatly from the inclusion of NGOs and public figures on the steering committee for the project.

## 2.5 Advocacy

Yet overall, the RC/RC has not adequately acted on its advocacy role to examine key issues of vulnerability and risk and to articulate a RC/RC vision for creating safer communities in the recovery process. Humanitarian and development organisations, including the RC/RC, have not been good at evaluating the broader situation, ultimately tending to focus on the progress of their own programmes. However, the RC/RC was too big a player in the Tsunami response not to recognise its own role in contributing to some of the dysfunctions in the overall response, such as the inflationary cost escalations and competitive pressures.

The RC/RC has tremendous potential within its mandate to promote broader attention to RC/RC values and principles and to critical issues like disaster risk reduction, poverty and vulnerability reduction, support to community recovery and resilience, and long-term sustainability – using analyses like the World Disasters Report or those that Oxfam has conducted in the Tsunami response. Such analyses help to raise public attention to key issues and drive further action by government partners and other humanitarian and development organisations. One point of departure might be for the RC/RC to commit to leading efforts to produce assessments of community and social needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities to complement the assessments on physical damage and economic losses that are often led by the World Bank and government.

The RC/RC should also be careful not to ease governments of their own responsibilities to provide assistance – the RC/RC role is meant to be auxiliary and focused on rallying attention and resources to the needs of the most vulnerable.

## 2.6 Learning

Returning to the broader question of learning, the Federation has yet to build an effective learning culture. The Federation in general also does not appear to monitor learning and has little real understanding of who reads “lessons” or how they use them. Unfortunately there is also a tendency to “reinvent the wheel”, and perhaps the most needed lessons revolve around how to deal with issues on projects that are inherited from previous teams.

Numerous comments were made during this review that critical lessons from the past have not been carried forward, for example lessons about land issues from the Balkans operations in the 1990s. In 2005 a review of lessons from past recovery operations was undertaken by the Federation Secretariat, but the report does not appear to have been widely circulated within RC/RC organisations.<sup>5</sup>

There was success in sharing innovations and approaches, particularly among technical counterparts, such as the spread of the use of leach pits in watsan programmes being implemented by various RC/RC partners in Aceh. Originally tried by one PNS, the innovation rapidly spread to become fairly common practice among a number of PNS and the Federation Secretariat in Aceh. However there are fewer examples of such sharing between teams in different countries.

Efforts to step back from day-to-day operations management and create dialogue on key issues have also been appreciated although limited in number. Examples include the workshop on cultural education in Islam organised by the German Red Cross in Aceh and the training on construction and watsan that was run in India to familiarise staff with experience and lessons from Gujarat response. These examples also demonstrated the strengths and resources available in the regions that are not often tapped as well as they could be.

Information sharing systems, like the aptly-named Shared Information System established in Sri Lanka to collect project information and lessons among RC/RC Movement partners, have shown promise but overall have been less utilised than expected.

While there is a broad interest to share lessons that have been learned, the system for enabling everyone to contribute lessons and find those that others have contributed just does not exist at the moment.

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<sup>5</sup> “Review of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies recovery operations”, 2006.

## Communication blueprint

### Internal communications

- R6.** Develop more flexible approaches to encourage collaboration across sectoral and geographic boundaries so that the RC/RC movement does not miss opportunities for tapping into the strengths and expertise of its diverse membership.

### Speaking as a RC/RC Movement

- R7.** Examine relevance of reporting process developed for the Tsunami response for application to other disasters, as has already started for the HIV – AIDS alliance in Southern Africa. This should also include exploration of further expansion of the approach to include the development of common indicators. (Federation)
- R8.** Enhance the use of public campaigns promoted by all RC/RC partners in a response operation to highlight RC/RC values and key programmatic messages.

### Communicating realistic messages

- R9.** The Federation Secretariat together with the NS need to continue to place emphasis on setting up communications teams with coordinated, consistent messages to explain the complexities of recovery programmes and ease unrealistic expectations from the donors, public and the beneficiaries.

### Engaging communities

- R10.** Recognise communication as a basic community need within RC/RC assistance and develop further community outreach strategies. (Federation)
- R11.** Enhance the use of participatory approaches to engage the affected population in assessment, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation processes in order to implement and deliver relevant programmes. The Federation should be a centre of excellence in communicating with the affected communities through its built-in community linkages of volunteers, branches and National Societies. (Federation)

### Advocacy

- R12.** Strengthen commitment to measuring impacts and analysing ongoing risk and vulnerability and unmet needs, from community perspectives not institutional perspectives. (Federation)

### Learning

- R13.** Establish a “bank of experience” to collect and share evaluations and lessons Federation-wide, in partnership with FedNet and DMIS. This should be a system allowing anyone within the RC/RC Movement to access and directly upload lessons. Current End of Mission templates should also be modified to have two parts – one focusing on internal comments and another focusing on lessons so that those can be shared more widely with the RC/RC Movement. (Federation Secretariat lead?)
- R14.** Establish routine for supporting forums and other space for dialogue on key topics at field and headquarters levels. This is also something that the RC/RC should help promote among other partners as an advocacy service. (Federation)

### 3. Coordination

*“If we had been able to work as a Federation during the survey phase, we would have been working like a Movement from the beginning.”*

*“It’s as if the Red Cross had collectively only been doing this for a few years, not for more than 100 years.”*

*“If we’re not presented with things to opt into, then we invent our own plans and systems.”*

RC/RC strengths are in its network, but it doesn’t always use them to best effect. Particularly in terms of personnel resources – people, knowledge, and experience – the RC/RC has collectively struggled to bring to bear the necessary resources even though it is by far the largest humanitarian organisation in the world. The RC/RC is also often very tentative to reach outside its network to tap other resources and particularly to look to academic, private sector, or civil society partners.

However it is clear that NS (both ONS and PNS) are ready to support truly cooperative RC/RC initiatives if there is a comprehensive RC/RC response and recovery plan with a menu of reasonable options through which they can meaningfully contribute and which embraces their role.

#### 3.1 Policy support and pre-planning

Pre-planning and pre-agreement among Federation membership are the only means for effectively addressing some of the core issues around coordination.

The Federation needs a new model of strategic leadership for large-scale disasters where there is strong interest from multiple PNS to support and implement programmes. The Federation Secretariat and ONS should play the lead role in this coordination, but it is not the same as being “the leader”. In such a situation the Secretariat needs to be a facilitator – to “lead from behind”. It needs to be able to deploy authoritative leaders who are also diplomats – who can achieve consensus and put in place organisation models that speed implementation rather than hinder it. This type of strategic leadership requires different tools as well – access to expertise, provision of useful services (back office, negotiation and legal).

The sheer number of RC/RC partners active in the Tsunami response has led to significant tensions between the overall desire to coordinate within the RC/RC Movement and the feeling by individual RC/RC organisations that they still must have the freedom to move forward with relevant projects to demonstrate progress and accountability to their own donors and publics. Cooperation and fulfilment of the humanitarian spirit within the RC/RC should be focused on bringing the full resources of the Movement to bear, enabling and guiding parallel action rather than blocking and frustrating initiative. While the Seville Agreement and the supplementary measures outline respective roles for the Federation, ICRC, and ONS, there is neither sufficient policy reference to the role of PNS nor sufficient acknowledgement of the legitimacy and need for mutual assistance within the RC/RC Movement. The further development of rules of engagement within the RC/RC Movement would provide a foundation for establishing agreements with governments to explicitly recognise and facilitate these RC/RC partner roles.

Numerous RC/RC partners highlighted the many challenges that they have faced in trying to develop recovery standards on the spot, although there has been progress in this area since the start of the Tsunami response. The Federation Secretariat has institutionalised the role of the Recovery Coordinator and established the Shelter Department. There has also been more emphasis among RC/RC partners on early recovery as evidenced in subsequent response operations (particularly in response to the Yogyakarta earthquake in 2006) and in updates made to FACT, RDRT, and general DM trainings.

There has also been increasing focus on contingency planning which is crucial for exploring new scenarios that may strain or break existing RC/RC systems. Such planning can be quite an effective tool for raising and addressing the perceived

conflicts of interests between RC/RC partners and for testing options for different response strategies.

Coordination also needs to be placed up higher on the agenda – what ever the particular agenda may be. Coordination is not effectively set as an expectation or performance criteria in the ToRs of most RC/RC staff. Instead progress is typically measured on direct implementation and not support to coordination and broader RC/RC Movement effectiveness. There is also still not sufficient engagement of non-traditional PNS in Federation dialogue and planning. There have been efforts at different levels to support new PNS and encourage them to participate in broader Federation systems. However there is still a need to understand better how these PNS are reflecting on experience from the Tsunami response and what openings there may be to further enhance cooperation within the RC/RC Movement as well as with other partners outside RC/RC networks.

### 3.2 Country response and recovery strategies

One of the key lessons has been that a comprehensive strategy is needed as the basis of the response and recovery plan and should include the following elements at a minimum: strong leadership support to the ONS, collaborative needs assessment, establishment of common goals and objectives, development of an effective RC/RC Movement operating model, and early attention to exit strategies.

- Strong leadership support to ONS in early days is critical to set the stage for collaboration and to support a constructive, secure ONS role in the overall response. Any NS would be over-whelmed in a big disaster, and more support is needed to help the ONS even to simply cope with the onslaught of assistance from other RC/RC partners. There were good examples of this in Sri Lanka in the support provided by the regional delegation in terms of management personnel and RDRTs. It is also crucial to make a distinction in this support between long-term capacity building and surge capacity to bolster immediate needs.
- Early collaboration in needs assessment would set the stage to drive planning and start building a shared understanding of the context among Federation partners. In the Tsunami response there was strong evidence that mutual assistance within the countries from quick response teams and from within the regions from RDRTs was able to arrive quickly on the ground and initiate assessment, coordination, and service delivery before international teams were able to arrive. RC/RC Movement partners need to actually be careful not to undermine these efforts and other local capacities as the RC/RC Movement deploys larger systems.

Another suggestion that was raised frequently in the interviews was to use the ERU mechanism more expansively to support management and administration ERUs or early recovery ERUs along the lines of sectoral competencies that many of the PNS are now engaged in developing. Enhanced engagement of PNS was one of the primary intents with the Recovery Assessment Teams (RATs), but this should be done at an earlier stage, with a wider range of partners, and including a wide range of sectoral and local expertise in order to better capitalise on available resources within the RC/RC system.

Numerous lessons from the Tsunami response highlight the criticality of conducting comprehensive needs assessments and analysis to ground programming. Too often in the Tsunami response significant commitments were made without guidance from appropriate needs assessments. This was particularly evident in the early commitments made to the governments in Sri Lanka and the Maldives that initially did not allow an opportunity for verification of beneficiary lists. At the same time RC/RC partners were often slow to conduct more in-depth types of assessment, particularly around livelihoods needs. The Yogyakarta response made use of learning from the Tsunami response to begin assessments for early recovery activities within the first several weeks of the

response. Assessment should then be an ongoing activity, particularly in the formulation of longer-term programming which often would benefit from more extensive assessment activities and in a manner that is separated from the early concerns to provide immediate relief.

A critical aspect in this assessment is good analysis of ONS branch capacities. The OD branch assessment that was conducted in Aceh toward the end of 2006 has provided extremely useful information for understanding the range of institutional needs facing different PMI branches in their own recovery processes and as they support the communities in their districts.

- Common goals and objectives will be most relevant and reliable when developed based on RC/RC values and principles, the ONS' longer-term strategic plan and CAS, local knowledge and resources, and priorities from affected communities as identified in collaborative assessment processes. Such goals and objectives will then reflect a cohesive strategy, particularly in cross-cutting areas, and not simply a compilation of activities.

A common critique of the RC/RC coordination frameworks in the Tsunami response is that they often provided too little guidance on broader strategic objectives and focused too much on review of lower level details. To support flexible models of cooperation between RC/RC partners, these objectives should be structured as simple rules or criteria that guide RC/RC initiative and entrepreneurialism. These criteria should include issues like community engagement, replicability, and risk reduction in addition to context specific issues identified in the needs assessments.

- An effective RC/RC Movement operating model should be established to encourage RC/RC partners to collaborate in setting strategic guidelines for response and recovery and to facilitate effective and streamlined partnering among RC/RC partners. Within this operating model, commitments by RC/RC partners should be explicitly mapped against common objectives. This was not always done consistently during the Tsunami response, even with some of the projects that were being implemented by the Federation Secretariat.

Coordination, implementation and cost effectiveness would also benefit from PNS focussing their expertise on specific areas of intervention, thereby forming clusters with other PNS specialised in the same sector. This follows the global level commitment within the Federation of the Future to establish both global and operational alliances. In Indonesia for example there was joint collaboration between several PNS on working with ONS branches under the Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction programme and efforts to develop common messages on early warning and climate change.

- Exit strategies are critical to long-term planning, affecting liability and risk management, capacity building plans, and staffing commitments. There is also a need to link current RC/RC programmes to ongoing national and local development initiatives, such as implementation of poverty reduction strategies. Recently in Indonesia RC/RC partners have initiated a series of discussions on exit strategy with a focus on developing a checklist of criteria for PNS to meet before they shut down their programmes and transfer commitments over to other RC/RC partners. In other countries the need for exit strategies is broadly recognised both as an immediate need and as an issue which should be more proactively addressed in RC/RC response and recovery strategies in the future.

### 3.3 Aligning broader systems

Experience from the Tsunami response has also emphasized the importance of good leadership, especially early on. Systems issues around human resources, resource mobilisation, advocacy, and international communications have often proven difficult to manage within existing RC/RC organisational management structures and

particularly across country, regional, and sectoral boundaries. Leadership engagement is critical to ensure that these issues are not ignored.

The Hong Kong meeting was anticipated by many as an opportunity to craft a joint strategy for Tsunami response and recovery and solidify leadership commitment across the RC/RC Movement for such a strategy. However it is clear that in many ways the Hong Kong meeting did not deliver in terms of outlining a coordinated set of joint commitments. Commitments were left too soft or happened entirely bi-laterally. Rather than maintaining a focus on joint solutions, at best the meeting instead provided a convenient marketplace for trade in projects. Looking at experience in previous disasters such as the earthquake in Gujarat, there is both a value and a realistic possibility for a forum among RC/RC partners to establish joint strategy and map out collective commitments toward that strategy. The Regional Strategy and Operational Framework (RSOF) has been appreciated, although matching country level strategies have not been developed as was originally anticipated. The Federation members clearly look to the Federation Secretariat either to facilitate and broker this strategic planning process or at least to create the space for Federation members to collectively do it themselves.

The Tsunami response also exposed issues around the separation in coordination between leadership and operations levels. This is an area where both the Hong Kong meeting and the later High-Level Group were intended to bridge gaps and strengthen leadership commitment among Federation membership. While much of the planning should be driven at the country level, not all decision-making within RC/RC can be devolved to country level if not all RC/RC are sufficiently represented there.

Overall a strong perception remains of a lack of accountability across all levels of Federation system, as well as a continuing lack of clarity on the roles of country delegations, regions / zones, regional departments in Geneva and operations / emergency response units – this last a concern which is particularly vibrant within the Federation Secretariat.

Internally within the Federation Secretariat there was substantial discussion of whether to create special units or to keep a mainstreamed management approach. Ultimately a special unit was set up (as was also set up in several of the PNS), yet questions remain about the extent to which adequate resources were provided and whether enough support was drawn from other parts of the organisation and broader Federation membership. Some functions were also added to existing departments to ensure that those roles and responsibilities would be picked up and continued by those departments.

The role of the Tsunami Special Representative in the Federation Secretariat was widely appreciated, particularly in terms of supporting strategic initiatives like the review of lessons from past recovery operations, the Tsunami Recovery Impact Assessment Monitoring System (TRIAMS) initiative, and interaction with the U.N. including the U.N. Special Envoy's office and ultimately in providing leadership in resolving the funding crisis. However there was a significant lack of clarity in reporting structure before this office was merged with the rest of the Tsunami unit.

These types issues will continue be a concern as the Federation Secretariat moves forward with its decentralisation process. As increasing investments are made in moving resources closer to the NS, the RC/RC needs to ensure that support is provided to zones and Disaster Management Units (DMUs) to in turn support ONS and country teams to manage disasters. There is also still a need to answer the question of how zones will share responsibilities with Geneva in addressing cross zone coordination and in maintaining relationships with PNS in future large disasters.

### 3.4 Coordination

For the future the expectations for coordination focus on three areas: coordination among RC/RC partners, coordination with external partners, and service provision.

- Coordination (within RC/RC)

The Movement Cooperation Framework has overall been perceived as a positive effort. Experience with Movement Cooperation during the Tsunami response and recovery has led to improvements in the design and concept for cooperation structures and is influencing the development of operational alliances within the new operating model of the Federation of the Future. For example in Sri Lanka the “change process” undertaken in 2006 produced a solution for differentiating the types of coordination needed for core, low-risk non-core, and high-risk non-core activities that has expedited progress in implementation, although there are still questions about how activities like livelihoods should be categorised.

Overall there is now a strong sense of cooperation that has developed within each of the countries. It is important to use the heightened awareness, attention to cooperation and the professional / corporate sense of joint responsibility that has developed to solidify tools and mechanisms for the future to ensure the RC/RC collectively reaches this point earlier. However many believe that far too much time is still spent discussing small details and that the coordination systems have at times penalised those who support the system while allowing a free pass to those who work outside of it.

Formal structures like the Movement Cooperation Framework are definitely needed above a certain threshold in terms of size of the operation and the number of RC/RC Movement partners involved. However the management of these cooperation frameworks needs to be pragmatic so as to balance decision-making at different levels (the bulk of the decision-making has to occur at a level in which all partners are sufficiently represented, while issues of interest to particular subsets may be more effectively handled separately) and support a constructive relationship between the ONS and the PNS (encouraging a level of influence that is not so much as to lead to dominance, and not so little that critical issues around sustainability, reputation, liability, and exit strategies are too long ignored). While the Technical Working Groups often functioned well in terms of sharing information about projects, they were less successful in setting common standards and screening out proposals that did not meet those standards.

As mentioned above, there is also a strong preference among Federation members that coordination focus on facilitating a collaborative environment where Federation members can also step up and take lead roles – in geographic areas, as service providers (such as the offer of the Norwegian RC to drill well boreholes for other RC/RC partners in Aceh) or as centres of excellence (such as the programme assistance provided by the Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support hosted by the Danish Red Cross).

The Federation Secretariat is considered the natural partner to facilitate this coordination, although it likely needs to lead with this coordinating role and place a secondary priority on implementation to fill gaps as needed. The establishment of a dedicated coordination unit within the ONS in Sri Lanka was widely perceived as a positive arrangement that facilitated dialogue and engagement within the coordination structure. Similarly the establishment of district offices and coordinators by the Federation Secretariat was seen as very beneficial to promoting coordination among RC/RC at local levels, although for many RC/RC partners these positions were established too late and not sustained long enough.

- Coordination (external)

Attention to coordination is often too inwardly focused. At critical points the RC/RC has not been sufficiently represented in external coordination processes, although the value of having liaisons with external partners (such as the PMI liaison to BRR in Aceh or the RC/RC representation in Sri Lanka in the disaster coordinating committee) is widely recognised. External partners almost invariably

see the RC/RC from the outside as a more cohesive entity capable of acting effectively and adding significant value at both community and broader policy and planning levels. To better fulfil these expectations from external partners, RC/RC partners should also be expected to share responsibility in representing the Federation.

- Service provision

Coordination and support services are most appreciated and utilised when they respond to the specific demands and needs of Federation members. In this respect the Federation Secretariat will need to be ready and able to “lead” the process, i.e. anticipate the need for services and offer or “sell” them to the PNS. In general the negotiation of an effective status agreement is widely seen as the foundation for an effective service model.

There has already been some progress in this respect in developing a standard service agreement, and the Federation Secretariat is currently in the process of hiring Support Services coordinator in Geneva to manage and support further development of this role.

### 3.5 Strategic partnerships

The RC/RC cannot realistically expect to develop competencies and comparative advantage in every sectoral area. The learning cost is simply too high and it basically defeats the idea of comparative advantage in the first place. Strategic partnerships (like the grant-based, owner-driven housing projects in Sri Lanka or the temporary shelter project in Aceh) are promising mechanisms for bringing together both RC/RC and external partners in innovative ways that maximise and complement RC/RC strategic strengths.

In establishing these strategic partnerships there is a need to balance internal consensus-building and effective negotiation with external partners. In the Tsunami response these two aspects did not always happen concurrently. However in future disasters the need to concurrently balance the two may be a significant challenge.

PNS organisations were also often able to develop effective partnerships among themselves or with external partners. There is also potential to do more with the RC/RC comparative advantage at local levels in terms of supporting RC/RC branches to more effectively partner with other actors, particularly civil society organisations. However some issues of how NS engage with external partners, such as the promotion of RC/RC values and principles and the use of RC/RC emblems, have not been addressed consistently in these partnering arrangements.

Outsourcing to private sector firms has also proved beneficial in allowing RC/RC partners to avoid having to develop all capacities in-house. However there has often been considerable duplication in the use of consultancy services by RC/RC partners. Recognising common needs and sharing resources would reduce duplication, encourage more standardized approaches, and more efficiently utilise RC/RC resources.

Partnerships with private sector firms are also viewed as a potential solution to the widely perceived lack of experience in managing large projects within RC/RC organisations. While the typical RC/RC response operation is not likely to expose staff to the level of management that has been required for some projects in the Tsunami response, there are organisations – particularly in the engineering and construction sectors – that manage projects of this complexity on a daily basis.<sup>6</sup> Such partners might also be able to lend experience to help address other issues that

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<sup>6</sup> For example ARUP which is a global design and business consulting firm that specialises in managing large engineering projects. Early in 2005 ARUP lent a project manager to UNHCR to help coordinate the transitional shelter working group in Sri Lanka who was highly successful in bringing together partners in a concerted approach.

come with managing mid- to large-sized enterprises – such as risk management and the need for expanded administrative systems. Right now the RC/RC is undoubtedly over-investing in construction projects from a risk perspective. Similarly tasks like procuring insurance coverage for local staff are proving quite different for a 10 person office than for an RC/RC “enterprise” with 1,500 local staff. Yet the RC/RC often tries to use standard systems in these cases, often incurring long learning curves and delays in providing effective service.

### 3.6 Evaluation

The lack of enforcement of even basic industry standards, including the lack of participation of many Movement members in external humanitarian accountability initiatives, implies that many Red Cross participants are loath to be exposed to close critical peer review. This has been clear in the initial reluctance to widely share the results of evaluations, such as the Real Time Evaluations, that have been undertaken. Within individual organisations, the supply and demand for evaluations also seems inverted with requests often coming from headquarters levels rather than from operational teams.

During this review RC/RC partners frequently mentioned that a key role for the Federation Secretariat in terms of coordination should be to lead a more solid RC/RC commitment to monitoring and evaluation. The Federation Secretariat has taken a lead in facilitating the development of TRIAMS together with WHO and UNDP, however internal commitment within the RC/RC at country level to TRIAMS has lagged the broader global commitment.

Experiences like the Listening Project in Aceh have shown the value of multi-stakeholder evaluation efforts to highlight gap areas from community perspectives. These types of multi-stakeholder evaluations provide a check to the typical monitoring activities that are often too closely focused on measuring programmatic goals to highlight issues that may be falling between programmatic and institutional boundaries. Gap analysis around shelter issues led to development of the Transitional Shelter programme in Aceh and the establishment of the Shelter Department in Geneva; however a more consistent commitment to gap analysis is needed to ensure that other issues do not go unaddressed for such lengthy periods in the future.

There has also been solid progress in enhancing community feedback mechanisms with a recently completed beneficiary survey for the Temporary Shelter programme in Aceh. However, there is a need to push beyond surveying beneficiary satisfaction toward more extensive analyses of underlying and unmet needs, including for example:

- How beneficiaries have modified their behaviour to establish or maintain eligibility for assistance provided by the RC/RC and other organisations?
- Who is made vulnerable by inflationary pressures caused by RC/RC and other assistance?
- How vulnerability is being reduced and resilience promoted?  
(There often seems to be a lack of confidence in community processes for recovery that puts the RC/RC squarely back in the debate from the 1980s about whether to provide “wet” or “dry” rations – i.e. whether to provide people with cooked meals or with raw materials and let them cook the food themselves – or even cash.)

## Coordination blueprint

### □ Policy and pre-planning

- R15.** Develop a new model of strategic leadership, emphasizing the role of the Federation Secretariat as a facilitator of ONS and PNS initiative. The Federation Secretariat then needs to strengthen its capacity to support this model by deploying authoritative, diplomatic leaders who can achieve consensus and lead the development of effective organisation. This type of strategic leadership requires different tools as well – access to expertise, provision of useful services (back office, negotiation and legal). (Federation Secretariat, PNS DM group)
- R16.** Establish basic rules of engagement for mutual assistance within the RC/RC Movement 1) in country planning through the CAS process, 2) in planning for operational alliances, and 3) in addenda to RC/RC Movement policy documents such as the Seville Agreement, the proposed Code of Good Partnership, and the Principles and Rules for Disaster Relief.
- The procedures should define and allocate clear leadership and coordination roles for specific Movement actors and clearly establish the responsibilities / obligations of non-leading actors in such relationships. These procedures could be part of Movement Disaster Preparedness Plans, with specific emphasis on coordination and administration of disaster response, and also potentially linked to initiatives within the IDRL programme. These concepts are not new but require consent, unequivocal support and common interpretation by all Movement actors. (Federation, Council of Delegates)
- R17.** Develop a comprehensive set of minimum standards for recovery within the RC/RC and mechanisms for advocating with governments for the establishment of broader standards for recovery that reflect RC/RC commitments to safe rebuilding and vulnerability reduction.
- R18.** Research the feasibility of other options – such as trust funds, the harmonisation mechanisms being developed among government donors, and shared resource centres (for construction or livelihoods consultancies for example) – as mechanisms for joint portfolio management within a common RC/RC response and recovery strategy.
- R19.** Strengthen institutional and funding commitments to assist NS in the most at-risk countries in disaster preparedness, following the example of the DREF which has been expanded to cover contingency planning activities.
- R20.** Test Federation-wide response systems with comprehensive scenario exercises to explore more intricate coordination dynamics.
- R21.** Strengthen Federation-wide performance accountability systems (including ToRs and review process) to prioritise coordination.

### □ Country strategy

- R22.** Establish plans to provide mid- and high-level support early on to assist ONS in planning and managing RC/RC roles collectively.
- R23.** Open up participation in FACT / RDRT by vastly increasing the number of teams in large disasters. This will a) ensure rapid and broad geographic coverage in the assessment and b) draw in a larger set of RC/RC Movement partners into the earliest stages of assessment and planning to better inform development of a collective RC/RC response and recovery strategy.
- R24.** Avoid commitments to government or the public that reduce flexibility for long-term programming. RC/RC has a clear role in relief and early recovery. Beyond that the focus should be on reinforcing the trusted role of RC/RC to address longer-term vulnerability based on effective needs assessment and analysis. It can be done but requires tools to help resist the pressures.

**□ Aligning broader systems**

- R25.** Further develop models for engaging high-level leadership within the Federation in addressing systemic issues and providing standard and consistent support to operational decision-making at the country level.

**□ Coordination**

- R26.** Strengthen the Federation delegation's role as a coordination centre for incoming PNS, by providing additional support for senior leadership and setting clear objectives for using collective capacities and resources in an effective manner, establishing effective links between the field and Geneva, and acting as an "architect" of cooperation to guide initiatives and link NS on the spot.
- R27.** Commit the Federation Secretariat to investing in genuine confidence building measures to promote itself as a competent and respected coordinator. The "Us / Them" relationship that presently exists must be addressed by both the Secretariat and National Societies agreeing and accepting respective responsibilities that place the interests of the survivors of the disaster as the primary focus of attention.
- R28.** Establish process to gauge and regularly monitor what NS expect from the Federation Secretariat in terms of services and support (operating status, banking services, liaison with government, implementation support, etc.)
- R29.** Continue development and streamlining of coordination mechanisms within the context of operational alliances and other elements of the new Federation operating model. Specific suggestions for action include:
- a) Strengthening finance, legal and administrative service packages offered to PNS through development of shared systems. (Federation Secretariat)
  - b) Exploring engagement of additional PNS support through the development of finance and management ERUs or including related positions in FACT and RDRTs. (Federation; lead PNS)
  - c) Establishing expectations and guidelines for Federation members to assume responsibility in representing Federation within external coordination mechanisms as needed. (Federation)

**□ Strategic partnerships**

- R30.** Review and refine RC/RC Movement modalities for external partnering and encourage further engagement with private sector, academic, government, and civil society partners. (Federation)
- R31.** Share learning from operational alliances to familiarise RC/RC partners with models and approaches. Encourage continued initiative among Federation members in establishing NS to NS alliances. (Federation)
- R32.** Establish strategic relationships with external partners (like ARUP) that can provide short- and medium-term support through secondments and that can also help to provide training and learning to existing RC/RC staff both pre-disaster and in focused sessions post-disaster in gap areas like large-scale project management, planning and construction.

**□ Evaluation**

- R33.** Establish mutually applicable and agreed industry standard monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems which are actively used, enforced and implemented together by all stakeholders.
- R34.** Commit to comprehensive country level programming evaluation in addition to annual reports currently being produced. (Federation, external evaluators)

## 4. Other key lessons

### a. Human Resources

There have been significant challenges to scale up and manage Human Resources sufficiently to meet the needs of the Tsunami response. In some cases chronic shortages of staff have left critical gaps in organisational structures for long periods of time. Limited compensation levels have made it difficult to hire people with the right coordination experience or specialist knowledge which is needed for many recovery and reconstruction activities. With many “first-timers” who are not very familiar with the RC/RC Movement filling key roles, there have also been significant challenges to orient them to RC/RC values and principles.

The RC/RC has also not always made good use of skilled local and national personnel, who often have not only relevant language abilities and technical knowledge but also come with their own professional contacts and resource networks that may bring additional benefit to the RC/RC. As in many previous disaster response operations there has been an over-reliance on foreign delegates to fill programme management and coordination positions.

The RC/RC is collectively doing some things better now, including greater use of skilled local staff in key positions and moves to better integrate local staff into administrative and management systems such as the creation of a local staff committee in Indonesia.

However, there is a widely perceived need among RC/RC partners to find better ways to address these issues more systematically and consistently by

- Tapping national and local knowledge and expertise to a greater extent.
- Relying more on volunteers and RDRTs who also often bring valuable cultural and language knowledge and abilities.
- Generating more fluidity for people and resources to move between RC/RC institutional boundaries according to programmatic needs. As much talk as there is about joint planning and coordination, there is still too strong a tendency to think and approach issues within institutional boundaries.
- Recognising that personalities and profiles are often critical – not everything can be learned or trained, especially in a short time-frame. As one interviewee described it, “We try to make professionals out of Red Cross people; we should make Red Cross people out of professionals.”
- Addressing staff turnover more effectively through the use of longer contracts and earlier planning for the recruitment of replacements.
- Planning within exit strategies to smooth transitions for staff with training and development programmes to help them move on to other opportunities once RC/RC programmes finish.

#### □ HR system recommendations

- R35.** Relax expectations to use delegates, hire national staff in key programme positions, and support them with effective training and career development opportunities.
- R36.** Establish expectations and recommended procedures for making contact with local networks and resource organisations.
- R37.** Treat entire RC/RC system world-wide as an HR resource, including tracking capabilities and strengths across (and within) NS.

**b. Volunteer systems**

Volunteers are seldom involved in the working process of the RC/RC Movement and instead are often relegated to set roles and particular kinds of activities. The issue of volunteering in the Tsunami response has been further complicated by the operational need to expand staff capacities and the philosophical desire to respect volunteering, at least in name. However the confusion of volunteer and staff statuses is leading to a destruction of real volunteering systems in many areas. This problem is further exacerbated by the lack of cohesive approaches among RC/RC Movement partners, leading to differences in per diem rates, subsequent perceptions of inequity and the creation of competitive markets for volunteers among RC/RC partners.

With the HR challenges in the Tsunami response, the RC/RC needs to look more than ever to engaging volunteers in RC/RC activities. There has been some success in the Maldives in promoting volunteer programmes, particularly in supporting volunteering through other institutions such as government agencies. These efforts now need to be tailored to producing volunteer relationships that can be picked up by the future NS that is currently being developed. In the response to the earthquake in Yogyakarta, a large number of spontaneous volunteers were engaged in supporting early recovery activities, drawing on both their local knowledge and their tremendous enthusiasm to help. Programme management was also substantially oriented toward engaging these volunteers in ongoing learning and the design of additional RC/RC assistance activities. Ultimately the issue of how to bring these new volunteers into the full context of the RC/RC presents many of the same challenges facing ONS and PNS in orienting and engaging "first-time" staff commitment to RC/RC values and principles.

While there recently there has been progress in establishing ONS volunteer guidance in Indonesia (at headquarters level), overall throughout the Tsunami response there has been a lack of clear guidance and real operational agreement among RC/RC partners to assist ONS to effectively manage the relationship between staff and volunteer positions. In too many situations *per diem* rates or other issues have been addressed by individual RC/RC organisations "under the table" rather than being brought back for joint dialogue within RC/RC coordination structures.

**□ Recommendations:**

- R38.** Develop common policy on recruitment and support to volunteers and improved tools for managing and retaining spontaneous volunteers in particular.