

Final project evaluation-Mission Report

Staff on mission: Barbara Tai, Senior Health Officer, IFRC EARD

Yang Shu Qin, Senior Researcher, RCSC

Mission dates: 7 - 12 May, 2011

Location: Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, China

Objectives: (a) To review the impact and get the project updates from RCSC HQ and the local branches;
(b) To provide technical support to the RCSC HQ and local branches on programme implementation;
(c) To discuss with the local RCSC branches and decide on the steps to move forward.

Mission included 2-day meeting in Yunnan with project officers and volunteers of RCSC Yunnan branch, and 2-day field visit in Sichuan with IFRC communication officer and a crew for photo taking and video shooting.

Results:

- Progress and challenges of PSS projects in Yunnan and Sichuan were presented by and discussed with RCSC people.
- 5 students, 5 teachers, 1 principal, 1 volunteer and 2 volunteer trainers had been interviewed and video taped.

Action Points:

Action	By when	Who
Editing of the video	By end of 2012	IFRC EARD Communication team
Organize the final project external review	By mid of September, 2012	IFRC EARD and RCSC HQ

Details of observations / findings:

Where we are at?

There are 2 provinces for the PSS project. In the PSS project, the 4 key outputs to be completed are: (a) PSS Toolkit development; (b) ERT development; (c) Community based PSS activities; and (d) Advocacy and project management

There are 4 major parties involved in this project from RCSC, they include Disaster Relief Department of RCSC headquarter, Sunshine In Your Heart of RCSC headquarter, Sichuan provincial branch and Yunnan provincial branch. According to the agreement signed on 27 May 2010, the 4 different parties should be responsible for different inputs and activities of this project:

1. Sunshine in Your Heart (SIYH): key input (a)

(a) PSS Toolkit development

- ✚ PSS toolkit development was completed by Sunshine In Your Heart since July 2010. Launching ceremony (20 July, 2010) and 3 days training (21-23 July, 2010) had been organized for 65 staff in disaster relief department and core volunteers of branches of RCSC.
- ✚ 10 toolkits had been sent for Sichuan RCSC use and 30 had been sent for Yunnan RCSC use.

2. Sichuan Province: key input (b)+(c)+(d)

(b) ERT development

- ✚ 10 volunteers had been recruited as ERT members and training had been provided in Yunnan on March, 2011.

(c) Community based PSS activities

- ✚ Volunteer recruitment : 50 regular Psychosocial Support Volunteers recruited in 5 counties;
- ✚ School activities :
 - Teacher recruitment : one psychosocial support team established. It is composed by 10 teachers in each of the 10 selected primary and middle schools in 5 prefectures.
 - Training to teachers: First phase of trainings in 10 schools had been completed since March 2011, the second phase trainings in 10 schools had been completed since October 2011. 100 teachers had been trained in these trainings.
 - School activities : All 10 targeted schools had completed 2 mass activities in their schools since November 2011. Around 20000 students reached and participated.
 - Equip bookshelves and toolkits in schools : Toolkits had been distributed to all participating schools ; bookshelves was found unnecessary as all schools had equipped their own bookshelves already. The budget for bookshelves had been reallocated for school activities since July 2011.
 - Review meeting for teachers : Review meeting for 100 teachers had been organized on November, 2011. An album and a record book had been published and distributed by Sichuan provincial branch for documentation of PSS stories and volunteers' sharing.

(d) Advocacy and project management

- ✚ Meeting coordinated with education department of Sichuan to advocate for the government support in PSS implementation in schools.
- ✚ PSS flash developed for media promotion purpose and was sent for IFRC's record since July, 2011.

3. Yunnan Province: key input (b)+(c) +(d)

(b) ERT development

- ✚ 30 volunteers had been recruited as ERT members and training had been provided in Yunnan on March and April, 2011.
- ✚ Insurance for the 30 ERT members had been paid for first year.
- ✚ ERT simulation drill had been conducted once on March 2012, 30 ERT members participated.
- ✚ 50 experts had been recruited to form a PSS expert pool and was managed by Yunnan RCSC for technical support.
- ✚ Standard operation procedures of national PSS ERT and management policy had been established and enforced by the Yunnan provincial branch on May 2012.

(c) Community based PSS activities

- ✚ Research on localization of training materials for elderly, minor ethnicity, rural area, special professions and rescue team were passed to Sunshine In Your Heart by Yunnan RCSC since Dec 2011, and was approved by RCSC HQ.
- ✚ Home visits of left behind elderly and community activities for ethnic minority groups had been conducted since February 2012. 83 elderly, 20 children, 1000 students, 1000 rescuer, 158 minority and 163 volunteers in Yunnan reached and participated.
- ✚ 2 local PSS reference centres had been launched on March and May 2012 in Yunnan.

(d) Advocacy and project management

- ✚ 3 seminars had been organized to the government officials, police officers and media group in order to promote PSS to the Yunnan Provincial Government. Around 2000 people reached.
- ✚ Promotional video had been produced and uploaded on website for public access : http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjYwNjY5Mjky.html. This promotional video had been sent to Francis for his comment since December 2011.
- ✚ The first newsletter had been published at the end of December 2011. 3 more newsletters and 1 documentary report should be published before June 2012.

- ✚ The project documentation is not yet commenced by the Yunnan branch since the project implementation is not yet completed.

4. Head Quarter: key input (d)

(d) Advocacy and project management

- ✚ Project Management meeting had been organized in Beijing for CBHFA and PSS program managers from provincial, prefecture and county levels during 13-16 September, 2010. The training addressed IFRC's standard requirements on Finance, Logistics, HR & Admin, Reporting, Communications and respective program details of CBHFA & PSP.
- ✚ After 10 months, as the financial and narrative reports submitted by HQ, provincial, prefecture and county levels were not upon IFRC's standard; management meeting was then organized in Yunnan again for CBHFA and PSS program managers and finance officers of RCSC local branches during 20-22 July, 2011.
- ✚ Internal program monitoring, evaluation, sum up meeting had been completed. RCSC HQ and both Sichuan, Yunnan branches shared their progress, challenges and lesson learnt. External review of the project is scheduled on September / October 2012.

When the project will be completed?

In summary, the PSP projects in Sichuan province had been completed since November 2011 but the project in Yunnan province was not completed as scheduled since the project documentation is not yet commenced by the Yunnan branch.

According to the addendum signed between RCSC HQ and IFRC on December 2011, all project activities should be completed by 31 March, 2012 and all final narrative and financial reports should be submitted to Federation on or before 30 June, 2012.

However, the final date of completion should be flexible enough for the captioned main outputs to be met within the real deadline (30 June 2012). Some of these outputs needs to happen one after another (sequential) because of the technical logic and some can be (and should be) done simultaneously (parallel activities) to beat the time.

What are the existing Challenges?

The existing challenges include:

In general:

1. The project officers and finance officers of RCSC HQ and local branches have little capacity on reporting upon IFRC's standard. The progress report and financial reports were not accurately prepared and submitted on time which caused delay on program implementation and financial clearance in result.

2. As the financial status was not clear, Federation delayed the transfer of budget to RCSC HQ and caused insufficient financial support for program implementation.
3. Lack of capacity on volunteer management was challenges to most of the provinces. High turnover rate of volunteers caused disable in volunteer mobilization and program implementation.
4. As the program implementation was delayed in both projects, the administrative and HR costs would be increased in result of program extension. RCSC HQ and local branches were discussed and agreed in the management meeting that all granted admin and HR budgets would not be increased in result of program extension
5. The RCSC existing finance and reporting systems are different from the IFRC system, submission of narrative and financial reports were usually delayed due to the incompatibility of the 2 systems and confusion of the responsible project officers.

In PSS:

6. The current toolkit is not appropriate for the adult and the age beyond the primary school students, hence, the development of a new toolkit is necessary (comments from the branch level)
7. Lack of good coordination between the two branches since the focal point of RCSC HQ is an extremely busy multi-tasking staff who works for numerous projects. Thus, a big gap in the project implementation and reporting occurred.
8. RCSC HQ should state clearly if Sunshine in Your Heart (SIYH) takes the lead in the PSS field rather than Yunnan branch to avoid more confusion in the future.
9. The leadership of the RCSC Yunnan local branch has been changed during the project period and the progress of the Yunnan PSP project has been delayed until the new leadership was advocated on the implementation of the project and his mandate was attained.
10. During the volunteer sharing session in Yunnan and Sichuan, most of the volunteer reflected that the challenges they are facing including lack of capacity or skills on PSS implementation, limited service opportunity and insufficient support from the community.

How to move further?

1. **Communicate again clearly with the RCSC HQ and local branches on the IFRC standards of reporting and set a date for financial clearance:**

 Report templates should be provided to RCSC HQ and local branches with training or explanation.

2. **Revise workplan and budget:**

- ✚ Revise the action plans of Yunnan branch and work backwards to see if each of the main outputs can be met within the agreed deadline.

3. **Empowering community volunteers:**

- ✚ strengthening and providing more trainings to the community volunteers;
- ✚ provide more service opportunities in order to accumulate more service experiences;
- ✚ advocate the community leaders and other organizations on the significance of PSS so as to get their support;
- ✚ mobilize and utilize all the possible resources in their own communities;
- ✚ strengthen the PSS network with other provinces or organizations in order to work together.

Key Lessons

1. The IFRC support and training content of PSS ERT in Sichuan, Yunnan needs to be better linked with the overall process of ERT developments of the RCSC such as water sanitation ERT and other ERT teams in development;
2. There are existing emergency response teams in some of the strong Red Cross branches such as the Beijing Red Cross. Integration of emergency PSS response to the existing resources (Blue Sky Rescue teams) should be further considered;
3. At least 1 project staff should be employed and trained with project management and reporting skills in each of the RCSC HQ and branches level, a working committee should be formed and worked closely to ensure proper communication and smooth operation.