



Overview

The Asia Pacific is a region riddled with disasters that cause destruction, damage and loss of life. To save lives and preserve the living, it is critical to re-establish water sources and rehabilitate systems paralysed by disasters to prevent the onset of disease. Large operations point towards urgent needs for functional preparedness in emergency water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

Under the humanitarian mandate to assist people affected by disaster and crises, the role of National Societies and Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers on the ground is pivotal for immediate response and effective recovery.

The Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) took a programme approach in accompanying National Societies to develop capacity in emergency WASH. From lessons learned through past operations, efforts focused on strengthening branch capacities as volunteers at this level would be first responders in emergencies. The programme is primarily supported by the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) to equip National Societies with expertise and assets. Since 2012, up to 29 National Societies have benefited from capacity development, knowledge sharing, WASH assets, networking and regional events, and country level technical support.

Purpose

This case study takes a closer look at experiences in three countries and one sub-region, each with a unique profile, a specific set of challenges and opportunities, and differing levels of WASH competencies. Through the lens of the participating National Societies and the communities they serve, this study captures rich layers of learning from multi-country implementation between 2016 to 2020.

The unfolding of the COVID-19 pandemic gives a glimpse of the resulting global restrictions that are testing aspects of National Society capacity and preparedness on the ground. It is an opportunity to take stock of progress and the outlook ahead - to celebrate achievements and share experiences with National Societies and partners contemplating capacity development in emergency WASH in the Asia Pacific region.

Approach

The programme aims for Asia Pacific National Societies to maintain, improve and scale-up WASH capacities to meet acute (disaster) and chronic needs (development). The following sections look at the impact of increasing emergency WASH response capacity in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR and countries in the Pacific region, under three programme pillars:

EQUIPPING FOR EMERGENCIES

Technical knowledge and know-how on WASH approaches and concepts

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Appropriate and accountable provision of WASH services to populations affected by disasters

ENSURING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

Effective and efficient response that address WASH needs of those affected sustainably



The impact of capacity development in emergency WASH is clearly seen through the responses of National Societies in recent disasters across the region.

RAPID RESPONSE - RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW

Preparedness in emergency WASH is demonstrated in effective deployment of trained volunteers and prepositioned WASH assets. These National Societies were able to assess and take appropriate actions to reach and assist affected people with emergency WASH services to prevent the spread of WASH-related diseases.

Bangladesh: Floods response in June 2018, July 2019 and July 2020

- 28,271 people reached
- 134,034 litres safe water distributed through Man-packs (a mobile water treatment system)
- Trained volunteers deployed for running Man-packs, rapid latrine construction, tube well disinfection, distribution of hygiene parcels and hygiene promotion

Emergency WASH programme highlights (2016- 2019)

- 8 Man-packs handed over, including maintenance support
- 290 people trained in emergency WASH, at national and unit (branch) levels



During the floods in July 2020, **Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS)** Red Crescent Youth (RCY) volunteers at unit level (branch equivalent) trained in emergency WASH were deployed with Man-packs to six most seriously affected districts. They processed and distributed safe drinking water, water purification tablets and hygiene leaflets, and conducted handwashing and hygiene messaging about prevention of transmission of diseases and household water treatment.

Emergency WASH achievements of this programme had strengthened the capacities of the National Disaster WatSan Response Teams (NDWRT) members and RCY volunteers. Since 2016, there has been a stronger focus on building capacity closer to the communities. BDRCS has trained NDWRT members to carry out WASH interventions in emergencies across the country and contribute cascaded training to other NDWRT members and RCY volunteers. As of March 2020, volunteers from 55 districts/city units (out of 68) have been trained.



It used to take 3, sometimes 5 days to organize and deploy trained national level volunteers and equipment to reach affected areas. Now in 2019 and 2020, it takes just a day to deploy volunteers to provide affected people with safe water and hygiene messages.”

Abdur Razzak, BDRCS Emergency WASH Officer

Cambodia: Attapeu dam collapse, July 2018

- 3,166 people reached
- 16,510 litres safe water distributed through Man-pack deployment

Emergency WASH programme highlights (2016- 2019)

- 6 Man-packs handed over, including maintenance support
- 499 people trained, at provincial level

Lao PDR: Attapeu dam collapse, July 2018 and Tropical Storm Podul, August 2019

- 17,360 people reached
- 328,200 litres safe water distributed through Man-pack deployment
- Trained volunteers deployed for running Man-packs, latrine installation and hygiene promotion

Emergency WASH programme highlights (2016- 2019)

- 6 Man-packs handed over, including maintenance support
- 201 people trained, at national and provincial levels



Lao Red Cross (LRC) mobilized rescue teams to Attapeu province where floodwaters had swept away the homes of 6,000 people. To provide emergency water and sanitation needs, two Man-packs and trained personnel were deployed from the Champasak Branch to Attapeu within three days of the disaster. In a camp set up at the Snamxay Secondary School that sheltered nearly 1,500 people, the units operated 20 hours each day for 2 weeks to process clean water. Due to the good work demonstrated, LRC was subsequently requested by the government to support a large camp in the badly affected area of Tamayod that could only be accessed by helicopter. The LRC produced clean water and provided assistance until public facilities were restored.

Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) deployed a trained team of volunteers and two Man-packs from Kampong Thom Branch to the neighbouring Stung Treng province. Stung Treng was flooded as it is located downstream of the areas impacted by the dam collapse in Attapeu province in Lao PDR. It took three days to fully deploy assistance, where the volunteers were able to put their training into practice. The response, coordinated through CRC Headquarters, was planned for 10 days but was completed in 7, after meeting immediate needs of the flood-affected people.



"Before 2017, there was zero capacity for emergency WASH and minimal experience in response. We would not have been able to undertake the massive response in the Attapeu incident. It was our first deployment and the experience has greatly raised our National Society profile."

Dr Bounma Xayasouk, LRC Director of Health Promotion Department

Pacific region: Cyclone Gita, February 2018

- 8,882 people reached in Tonga with hygiene messaging

Emergency WASH programme highlights (2015- 2019)

- 5 Man-packs handed over (2 for Samoa and 3 for Fiji)
- 210 people trained, through Pacific-wide and country-level trainings
- Handover of water testing materials and water treatment unit spare parts



In response to Cyclone Gita, **Samoa Red Cross Society** distributed relief supplies and provided emergency WASH assistance to affected communities, while **Fiji Red Cross Society** shipped out water and relief supplies from the capital Suva to the remote Southern Lau islands.

Tonga Red Cross Society focused on supporting affected communities with hygiene promotion combined with health and disaster risk reduction awareness, coordinated together with the Disaster Management Unit to reach households that had received relief items. These joint efforts were able to reach affected households and school students with key hygiene messages and awareness.

The above-mentioned National Societies had received emergency WASH training together with other Pacific National Societies in 2015 in Samoa, and 2017 in Fiji, organized by the IFRC Suva country cluster support team (CCST). In addition to these regional trainings, national-level training was implemented in Samoa, Vanuatu, Micronesia, Kiribati and Tuvalu. Without this programme support, there would be limited WASH capacity as these are rare opportunities to reach National Societies with emergency WASH training. The integration of early warning early action (EWEA) provided participants with understanding of potential threats, hazards and actions, and looking at emergency WASH efforts as a component for preparedness, response and early recovery.

1



Local pre-positioning of WASH assets

National Societies are supported with procurement and pre-positioning of WASH assets at branch level in disaster-prone areas. The Man-pack (formally known as Aquaplus AP700CL) provides a low-cost low technology solution that is self-contained and portable. It is an affordable water treatment unit that is easy to set up and inexpensive to maintain. National Societies have reported positive experiences of using the Man-pack and have been able to source for parts and repairmen to manage small repair works locally. This contributes to continuous use and longevity of the Man-packs. Relevant WASH-related materials have been handed over to National Societies to support effective WASH service delivery. Items for water testing and specialized spare parts ensure quality of water produced and the sustainability of WASH assets provided to serve those in need.

2



Emergency WASH knowledge and skills

Training on emergency WASH approaches and concepts is carried out at the branch level to increase National Societies' capacity for effective response. Staff and volunteers are equipped with technical skills and knowledge to operate and maintain WASH assets and to deliver community-based health education and hygiene promotion.

Emergency WASH modules are adapted according to the needs of each National Society. The design and approach for training encourages progression – with each step up (e.g. unit to national level), new topics and methodologies are introduced to keep participants updated with new and relevant developments, standards and guidelines.

3



Information, education and communication (IEC) materials

National Societies are supported to develop, translate and/or print IEC materials according to local language and context. These include:

- Posters and leaflets for hygiene promotion activities in communities, on:
 - proper handwashing steps with soap and water
 - disease transmission routes and its prevention
 - household water treatment and safe storage
 - how to use water purification tablets
 - tube well disinfection
- Key IFRC guidance documents used in training staff and volunteers on:
 - IFRC WASH guidelines for hygiene promotion in emergency operations
 - IFRC menstrual hygiene management guidelines
 - Household water treatment and safe storage field manual

In 2018, the IFRC Suva CCST collaborated closely with National Societies of Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, and developed three types of WASH posters - handwashing with soap, drinking water safety and security, and environmental health. The posters were printed and handed over to these National Societies and were essential for supporting hygiene promotion messaging. They represented a big step for some National Societies without IEC materials.



"I am able to take action for our own people and for my family, without waiting for national level support," he says. "Sometimes the help we give is so simple – just clean water and dry food, but the smiles we get are priceless and inspire me to work harder."

Emon Arafin, BDRCS RCY volunteer, Tangail Unit



A small-fund allocation for quick deployment under this programme was activated for emergency WASH responses in Bangladesh and Lao PDR

The scale of the 2020 floods in Bangladesh triggered support under IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which can take 12 to 15 days for approval. A small-fund allocation was utilized for immediate emergency WASH deployment covering the first stage of response. It provided cash for expenses covering transportation and meals of deployed volunteers, minor repairs and spare parts. This allocation enabled trained teams to respond quickly to affected people in need of relief. It also allowed the teams to gather the first round of information for BDRCS to draw up a plan of action for the DREF.

Similarly, after the 2018 dam collapse, LRC had access to and utilized a small-fund allocation to enable quick deployment by the Champassak Branch to support their neighbouring province of Attapeu. The fund covered costs for volunteers' accommodation, meals and travel, and equipment including jerry cans. This was very useful to enable rapid response of trained human resources and essential items, as the affected branch lacked funding for immediate response. The positive outcome of this approach resulted in LRC initiating emergency funds for other branches, to be managed and raised by the respective branches.

LESSONS STILL LEARNING

Localizing hardware options: Water treatment units to process safe water for distribution in emergency responses vary in features, usage, production capacity and cost. National Societies are supported to consider what is suitable for their context, such as human resource and capacity to operate, financial capability to maintain and geographical conditions under which WASH assets are deployed. In Bangladesh for example, there is limited land space to set up bulky water treatment units during floods. Therefore, BDRCS needed a more compact and smaller scale system that could be set up on a boat from which to distribute water.

Continuing focus on branch-level capacity: Forced lockdowns and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic had disabled surge capacities to send either people or equipment across international and local borders. This experience has reinforced the rationale for developing emergency WASH capacity at branch level as branch volunteers are usually the first responders. It is clear that the sustainability of emergency WASH in and by National Societies will benefit from increased self-reliance at the branch level. However, there is much more work for National Societies to do in this area. LRC is using their experience in emergency WASH to advocate with the local government for emergency funding and partial support of emergency WASH training. As volunteers are the bedrock of interventions, it is important for National Societies to have consistent and frequent training to ensure volunteers remain motivated and the pool of emergency WASH capacity is maintained. Training to continue developing knowledge and skills is also crucial for branch level volunteers to progress towards national level teams.

National-level capacity: The pandemic restrictions had impacted heavily on support for the recent Tropical Cyclone Harold. As surge could not be deployed to Vanuatu, the IFRC Suva CCST supported remotely from Suva. According to the WASH Adviser in the IFRC Suva CCST, "It is hard to make things happen through a computer screen, especially coordinating logistics and hardware. This really brings home the absolute need for national in-country capacity."



Never too early for hygiene awareness

CRC conducted hygiene education sessions in disaster-prone communities during non-emergency times, in parallel with monitoring visits to villages covered under the programme. As of August 2020, these sessions have benefited nearly 20,000 villagers with key hygiene and health messages. They employed interactive methods and visual aids to help rural communities understand the dangers of contaminated water, how diseases spread and how to prevent them. Raising community awareness contributes to preparedness and gets communities involved for more effective response action. Branch Red Cross volunteers (RCV) trained in emergency WASH conduct the sessions in their own communities, giving them the opportunity to put what they have learned during the training into practice. It is effective, both in terms of delivery and cost, to capitalize their own branch RCV to do community outreach. The sessions contribute to the balance of hardware support with software interventions and add great value during pandemic times as communities are constantly reminded on key hygiene messages, particularly the importance of handwashing with soap and water.



Community focus, gender and inclusion

IFRC takes a progressive learning approach to align National Societies with standardized guidelines. The introduction of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in emergency WASH training was generally well received but more work is needed to promote this new and important topic. Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society and Tuvalu Red Cross Society make every effort to ensure inclusion of MHM in emergency WASH training that feature the dignity, access, protection and safety framework. Male and female participants were separated for specific practical sessions that could be sensitive, such as during a demonstration on how to use re-usable sanitary pads. On the contrary, in Bangladesh and Cambodia, both male and female participants were present in the same room when they learned about MHM. For both National Societies, it was their first time learning about this topic and the experience made them realize the importance of considering issues of menstruation during emergency response, as well as related challenges. National Societies have a role to play in ensuring opportunities for women to be trained and deployed. BDRCS upholds the practice of always nominating one man and one woman to participate in unit-level emergency WASH trainings. If a 50:50 ratio is not possible, then a 40:60 women to men ratio is maintained.



Localization and adaptation: global strategies for local action

The work of adapting IFRC guidance and tools into local language and context facilitates effective training through local understanding. This then increases local technical capacity for response in emergency WASH and a greater pool of trained experts to train more people.

Efforts to contextualize WASH tools can facilitate opportunities for joint action with local partners and allow National Societies to work more closely with governments by aligning with national policy and tools. It also demonstrates a respect for local culture and relevance. In LRC, various IEC materials developed, printed and distributed have served as tools for staff and volunteers in emergencies and developmental programmes. These posters were developed based on the version obtained from the government and include key topics such as household water treatment, handwashing and Sphere standards.

ការបង្កើនទិដ្ឋភាពការអនុវត្តកម្មវិធីសម្រាប់ស្ត្រី និងស្ត្រីស្នាក់នៅជាមួយគ្នា។ គ្រួសារ ក្នុងតំបន់មានគ្រោះរោគស្ត្រី



The training I received on MHM is so useful as I can provide important guidance during door-to-door hygiene promotion,” she says, describing communities where women are not allowed to come out to distribution points. “I want to organize workshops to address the needs of women and girls who are often neglected in mainstream society.

Anjumonowara Charity, BDRCS RCY volunteer, Tangail Unit



Emergency WASH training is tailored to Pacific cultural and geographical contexts. Higher practical hands-on learning is a key factor. To overcome the lack of facilities and materials, training approaches have to be adapted and resourceful, making the most of nature and what is available to be used – from bamboo to tin cans and old buckets.

LESSONS STILL LEARNING

Making sense of messages: Some of the handwashing posters distributed by LRC during emergency operations were found to be too wordy and not suited for communities made up of diverse ethnic groups. Improvements were made to focus on key messages - use simple language easily understood by local populations to avoid misinterpretation and messages should be readable from afar. These may be small adjustments but are critical in ensuring messages are well-received and understood by villagers.

A donor perspective: During the visit of JRCS representatives to Kampong Thom, Cambodia in December 2019, they commented on hygiene education sessions that were run in parallel with emergency WASH trainings: “We see that the outreach is done by a volunteer trained in emergency WASH, who is also a leader in the community and is well-accepted by them. We were surprised that the session was delivered using games, visual aids and F-diagram and have learned new ways to disseminate information to reach our own Chapter communities more effectively from what we observed here in Kampong Thom.”

COVID-19 pandemic as reflection: The impact of the pandemic highlighted needs for continuous learning, re-learning, and applying new and various ways to overcome movement restrictions. Volunteers and communities must be kept safe as a result of activities undertaken for emergency WASH, whether in a training or during a response. As demonstrated in Cambodia, the outreach session is a great channel to provide key hygiene messages during non-emergency times, contributing to preparedness for the pandemic.



Needs-based and progressive programme approach

National Societies with strategic motivation to implement emergency WASH are supported with focused activities to reach shared objectives. They are equipped with assets and expertise balanced with knowledge and skills to assist communities affected by disaster – to meet their immediate WASH needs and prevent the spread of diseases. Support is customized based on situational needs, adjusted according to each National Society's progress over the period of support with emphasis on sustaining and building on the capacities developed. In driving this programme, the IFRC leverages on advocacy, peer support and shared tools for accountability, community engagement and inclusion to deliver technical training and assistance with financial support by JRCS. IFRC draws on the strong network of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers to ensure community focused interventions at branch level.



Effective emergency WASH framework

National Societies, as auxiliaries to government, are supported to establish standard operating procedures and tools for consistent and accountable response, in line with national guidelines, Red Cross Red Crescent principles and established international guidelines. In the Pacific, as the function of emergency WASH is integrated with other sectors led by Disaster Management, emergency WASH training takes on an integrated approach in terms of participation, content and delivery. The IFRC Suva CCST takes a strong role for centralized support to National Societies in response and capacity in emergency WASH. In 2017 and 2018, this programme supported specific activities to define and integrate emergency WASH standard operating procedures in disaster and contingency planning in the Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.



Regional coordination

A regional emergency WASH officer supports counterparts in National Societies and IFRC offices to coordinate capacity strengthening activities, in addition to coordinating emergency WASH technical and surge support for other National Societies across the Asia Pacific region. Two full-time national WASH officers implement emergency WASH activities in Bangladesh and Cambodia.

To improve coordination, networking and knowledge management internally and with partners, the APRO coordinates parallel activities that further strengthen National Societies' capacities. This covers regional training such as training of trainers for hygiene promotion in emergencies, and the regional disaster response team training. In addition, APRO works with National Societies to translate and contextualize key WASH materials such as the IFRC WASH guidelines in hygiene promotion in emergency operations and the IFRC MHM guidelines. This ensures and encourages alignment of messages across National Societies.



Documenting achievements and applying learning

Two internal reviews were carried out to analyse the implementation of activities, and how they have contributed towards strengthening emergency WASH capacities of the targeted National Societies. The first review focused on activities between 2012 to 2015 implemented in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific.

The second review focused on Bangladesh, Cambodia and Lao PDR, looking at activities between 2016 to 2020. Some of the recommendations in the first review were addressed, as captured in the second review. For example, the first review revealed that some National Societies lacked funds for immediate emergency response and in turn delayed the delivery of much needed support. This was addressed in subsequent years where the programme started to allocate and have in-place small funding accessible to National Societies.



I appreciate the role given to me and the opportunity to participate in the regional training in Bandung. It is a privilege to take that learning back to my National Society and continue to increase our capacity in emergency WASH.”

Korm Sokhan, CRC Project Officer



Emergency WASH training and response – the Pacific way

In the Pacific, participation in emergency WASH training comes from many sectors such as Health and Disaster Management. Given the circumstances and multiple challenges faced by remote and small-island states, this is the way to go - integrated learning and integrated response. The participation of New Caledonia, Australia and New Zealand is important for the opportunity to share expertise and sustain networking in the region, as is working closely with key governmental bodies. A key feature in the Pacific is the inclusion of EWEA in training content as Pacific islands are extremely vulnerable to weather anomalies and effects of climate change. Strong links with the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre on EWEA protocols and forecast financing creates the platform for working with Meteorological Offices and for support with facilitation, expertise and updates.

LESSONS STILL LEARNING

Dedicated human resources at the regional and country level to focus on planning and rolling out the programme is a key factor. The IFRC position at the regional office, in place since 2016, has been crucial to the programme in providing valuable technical support and work closely with National Societies to develop and operationalize their emergency WASH objectives and strategies. Similarly, WASH specific National Society positions (currently only two are supported by this programme) are critical for effective and efficient implementation of this programme in country.

Sustain learning and encourage exchange through active networks: A regional training of trainers for hygiene promotion in emergency operations was carried out in April 2019 in Bandung, Indonesia. A total of 24 participants from 16 Asia Pacific countries received training, including guidance on how to adapt and replicate the training in their respective National Societies. The regional gathering was a unifying platform for WASH practitioners to participate as equals in skill sharing and peer support. The network is sustained through a WhatsApp chat group to exchange information. At country level, similar platforms have been set up for coordination and response by CRC and BDRCS using Telegram and social media networks.

Peer support for expertise and knowledge exchange in emergency WASH have resulted in shared regional benefits and should continue. IFRC has a central role in coordinating bilateral exchanges under this programme that further strengthens the regional network. For example, Palang Merah Indonesia supported LRC in an emergency WASH training of trainers in 2017, while LRC supported the Thai Red Cross Society in a training of trainers on hygiene promotion in emergencies in 2019.

Integrated approach to emergency WASH: Sectoral integration is an absolute necessity for Pacific National Societies - working in silos result in delays. Not every National Society may be prepared to disable departmentalised legacies but there are clear benefits in shared planning and response between Disaster Management, Health and WASH teams. At the regional level, IFRC programming provides the opportunity for integration in training and to engage for relevant support from units/personnel such as logistics, information management, communications, human resources and planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

CONCLUSION

Each National Society had different experiences in developing emergency WASH capacity but achieved the same objective – stronger capacity for timely and effective actions to reach people affected by disasters with appropriate WASH services to prevent the spread of diseases. This study concludes with evidence of **positive impacts**, areas for **more to be done better**, and the **outlook ahead**.

POSITIVE IMPACTS

Making a difference where it matters. The approach and investment in training and equipping National Societies at branch level closest to communities is clearly demonstrated as the way to continue. Branch volunteers are most effective as they support their own communities in crises. WASH assets prepositioned in targeted areas have resulted in significantly reduced time required to respond – every day saved counts in achieving better health and restoring dignity.

Recognized for response. National Societies have been able to deliver more comprehensive WASH response and are being recognized as strong WASH local actors in emergencies. This has raised their profile among partners and other actors whilst reinforcing their role as auxiliary to the government.

Women in WASH. The gender approach has improved the presence and participation of women in trainings and emergencies. While opportunities respecting diversity, gender and local participation have increased, there is need for continuous advocacy to encourage more systemic involvement of female volunteers and staff, including in positions of leadership.

Pandemic prepared. Safely managed WASH services and hygiene practices were established in local communities through branch level emergency WASH activities. When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, increased hygiene messaging on hand hygiene reinforced the effective barriers to transmission of the coronavirus in homes and communities.

MORE TO BE DONE

Expanding emergency WASH. The objective of APRO is to increase the number of WASH-ready National Societies. Focus will continue on establishing a robust regional network of emergency WASH experts that can deploy rapidly and effectively, and in developing platforms for exchange and networking to share learning that will benefit a wider audience.

Working in teams and themes. The role of APRO WASH will evolve in tandem with each National Society's progress, including working on cross-cutting topics and emerging themes such as cash programming, urban WASH and climate change. There are opportunities to integrate with other IFRC flagship programmes on disaster response and preparedness and with thematic leads for effective programming.

Virtually viable. To alleviate restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, APRO WASH will work on digitalizing emergency WASH modules to reduce the need for face-to-face trainings and to reach more volunteers. This will include more structured remote technical support to National Societies in place of in-country missions.

Profiled and positioned. National Societies need clear strategies and plans that articulate their priorities, and a seat at the table to ensure that decisions, resources and investments are led by the National Societies for and by the people they serve. At the same time emergency WASH capacity development must expand at branch level and be positioned for response.

OUTLOOK AHEAD

Continuous and consistent support. This programme benefited from unwavering commitment of a single donor who recognized the value of investing in volunteers and staff and equipping National Societies with expertise and assets. Since 2012, JRCS has contributed nearly CHF 2 million in funding to strengthen emergency WASH capacities of Asia Pacific National Societies. Consistent funding from JRCS made it possible for IFRC to complement organizational coordination, technical support and resources from other partners for a comprehensive and holistic approach to strengthen emergency WASH in the Asia Pacific region. The funding enabled employment of a regional emergency WASH officer based at the APRO and full-time national emergency WASH officers in two countries. This support has established the cornerstone for furthering emergency WASH capacity in the region.

The road ahead. Investment in capacity development must not lose momentum as there is much to do to sustain the progress made. Funding support needs to evolve to be more sustainable. Now more than ever, National Societies need to be WASH-ready to weather the current 'double-disaster' – emergency response and preparedness in the era of COVID-19.

With its regional perspective and country-specific understanding of National Societies, the APRO is best placed to continue efforts to strengthen the capacities of National Societies in emergency WASH preparedness and response. Taking the experiences and learning from past implementation, an emergency WASH strategy is under development to guide IFRC in better supporting Asia Pacific National Societies and reaching partners who share the vision for strong programming in health and WASH.





GLOSSARY

APRO	Asia Pacific Regional Office	IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
BDRCS	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society	JRCS	Japanese Red Cross Society
CCST	Country cluster support team	LRC	Lao Red Cross
CRC	Cambodian Red Cross	MHM	Menstrual hygiene management
DREF	Disaster relief emergency fund	NDWRT	National Disaster WatSan Response Team
EWEA	Early warning early action	RCV	Red Cross volunteer
IEC	Information, education and communication	RCY	Red Crescent Youth
		WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.



日本赤十字社
Japanese Red Cross Society

The Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) is a major actor in international disaster response. Within the IFRC system of deploying Emergency Response Units, JRCS is renowned for mobilizing emergency hospitals and basic health care in the immediate aftermath of disasters. Their primary expertise in health response and recovery relates to safe water, sanitation and hygiene promotion as critical factors for curative and preventive health care. Recognizing that the capacity of National Societies is key to providing quick and effective response to vulnerable people affected by disasters and crises, JRCS leads strong programming in Health and is a committed partner for WASH.

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