

Annual report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Philippines

Appeal No. MAAPH001

6 April 2009

This report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2008.



Through emergency appeal funding, the Philippine National Red Cross continues helping families living in makeshift shelters to build semi-permanent homes. Despite the lack of funding for the 2008-2009 appeal, the national society is taking steps to improve its service delivery and capacity building of volunteers. (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)

In brief

Programme summary: The 2008-2009 appeal to support the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) focused mainly on organizational development where emphasis was placed on the continuous expansion of volunteers based throughout the country and increasing the national society's capacity in disaster management and health care.

Financial situation: While the total budget for 2008 was placed at CHF 2,158,654 (USD 1.93 million or EUR 1.31 million), there were no funding contributions made to the 2008-2009 annual appeal. No expenditure is therefore recorded under this appeal. However, capacity building in disaster management was carried out with the aid of funding from the 2006 Typhoons emergency appeal. In addition, the emergency appeal launched for Typhoon Fengshen in 2008, seeking CHF 1,996,287 (USD 1.87 million or EUR 1.34 million) to assist 80,000 families for six months is up to 99 per cent covered.

There is a move to channel funding from the recently closed [2006 Typhoons](#) emergency appeal to support the annual plan 2009-2010, and so ensure that funding is available for the International Federation to assist in programme work and capacity building of the national society in the year ahead.

Our partners:

In-country, the PNRC works directly with the International Federation in emergency response and interlinked multilateral programme work. However, there are also several bilateral programmes being run in different parts of the country by the German Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross. These projects focus on water and sanitation, rehabilitation of health facilities, disaster preparedness and mitigation, and barangay (*village*) disaster action team (BDAT) training.

Context

As the largest voluntary humanitarian organization in the country, the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) carries a clearly defined authority and a wide scope of multilateral humanitarian activities and social services. Its long-standing reputation of being extremely well-committed, highly organized and operational allows it to respond effectively when confronted with the multitude of disasters that occur in the country annually.

Philippines itself experiences an average of 20-25 typhoons every year which are often followed by large-scale flooding and landslides. The country is also open to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. In 2008, the country experienced a flurry of typhoons, floods, landslides and sea surges, and took an especially large buffeting from Typhoon Fengshen in June 2008 for which an emergency appeal was launched for CHF 8.3 million and later revised.

Given the frequency and intensity of natural disasters in the country, the national society and its provincial chapters have extensive experience and knowledge in relief and rehabilitation programmes in the Philippines context. These weigh significantly in carrying out assessments and coordinating the distribution of relief items, and lend efficiency and effectiveness to the activities of the PNRC, making it recognized and respected nationwide for its efforts in supporting those who need it most.

This positive image and reputation in humanitarian aid have helped PNRC develop good resource mobilization skills, and the national society has received much international and national support in times of disaster. The PNRC leadership continues to encourage maintaining the high profile of the PNRC and constantly challenges its staff and volunteers to expand their skills, knowledge and innovative thinking in their activities. PNRC recognizes the need for a change of approach in order to widen positive impact of its work on existing vulnerabilities, particularly in remote *barangays* or villages.

This approach looks towards strengthening and enhancing skills and response time of the national society as a whole. Apart from the anticipated natural weather events that frequently affect the country, there is also additional risk triggered by climate change. This does not bode well for many of the 7,000 islands that make up the Philippines as various islands are only a few metres above sea level and could be swamped by rising sea waters.

Apart from impact caused by weather events, the Philippines is also home to an increasing number of families who regularly experience hunger. The national nutrition council reports the rise of severe malnutrition in the country in addition to the existing high level of micro-nutrient deficiency which traditionally results in the widespread stunting of children below age 12. With the rise in food prices, especially rice, additional burden is put on the poorest families who often reserve up to 80 per cent of all income for essential food items.

Lack of equality in distribution of resources and labour in the Philippines also results in limitations to education for many. The UNDP human development report (HDR) ranks the Philippines at 102 out of 179 countries with a medium-level human development rating¹. While poverty itself is multi-dimensional, the Philippines ranks at 37 out of 108 developing countries on the HDR index. In-country unemployment is at a high level and more than 10 per cent of Filipinos work abroad. Their overseas remittance constitutes vital income for many. Currency fluctuations between the USD and the Philippine peso (PHP) have also reduced the Filipino public's purchasing power, increasing the financial burden of those struggling to cope with the high price of food items.

Lack of access to safe land is yet another difficulty facing many families. The number of homeless and squatters add to high pre-existing numbers of poor people; their children also do not attend school and as such, will lack qualifications for adequate jobs in the future. There is a high probability that they too will end up homeless like their parents. As such, the PNRC faces great challenges in serving an ever-growing population of which a large portion is economically deprived.

The government provides some support to those who have lost their homes; however, its focus is limited in this respect as more wide-reaching concerns such as the price of rice and the re-construction of public infrastructure are also part of their mandate. Also, renewed conflict in the southern area of the country

¹ http://hdrstats.undp.org/2008/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_PHL.html

puts additional pressure on government resources. People in these areas who are impacted by such conflict are also supported by the PNRC.

Progress towards outcomes

Given the lack of contributions towards the 2008-2009 appeal, this annual report will not report on objectives stated in the original appeal launched in December 2007. The focus here lies largely on work that has been ongoing in terms of organizational development and specifically on the progress of volunteer recruitment under the Project 143 initiative. Efforts in this area are also linked to the Philippines Typhoons appeal launched in 2006, and the Typhoon Fengshen appeal launched in 2008, which is currently ongoing.

The International Federation continues to support the national society, drawing on funding and resources from these two emergency appeals, and interlinking activities that cover both response and capacity building in their different ways. Key personnel from the PNRC continue to develop their skills and expand their experience, sharing these with a wider audience through subsequent training sessions.

Outcomes/Expected results

The vaunted position of the PNRC in the local context is both an advantage and a challenge. Seen as a highly efficient and effective player in rapid response, the national society, through its invaluable volunteer network, does its utmost and succeeds greatly in achieving what it sets out to do. However, these high expectations also stretch the national society's reserves and it is not always able to access more remote areas where assistance may be needed, with sufficient and cost-effective use of human and material resources.

The current Project 143 is a programme that seeks to make up that shortfall through the expansion of human (if not material) resources throughout the country. The need for a greater number of volunteers, especially at *barangay* (village) level is a key priority, so that PNRC can work toward:

- Coping with the scale of emergency operations required in response to the effects of climate change; and
- Enabling the national society to engage in crucial preventive health initiatives at community level.

The PNRC seeks to encourage volunteerism at barangay-level, especially in the more remote areas of the country in order to deliver timely, effective and quality humanitarian assistance. The national society continues to identify, recruit, organize, train and mobilize volunteers at the community level for immediate response during disasters and emergencies. It also helps strengthen the capacity of community members in the barangay to cope with disaster and emergency situations through proper education and skills training.

Having more on-the-ground volunteers at barangay level is imperative for faster, better quality and more efficient community action. Realizing this, the PNRC's decision to scale up volunteer recruitment to 1.8 million volunteers by the end of 2009 is understandable. The breakdown behind this massive figure is 44 individuals in each barangay; this would include one team leader, nine volunteers for health, nine for disaster management, and 25 for blood services per barangay. With 42,000 or more barangays in the country, the figure of 1.8 million – while not easily achieved - is not as impossible as it may appear.

Benefits of these volunteers being present on-site, well-trained, and motivated will resound on all every community in the country. It is an extraordinary prospect that makes the most of the Red Cross' comparative advantage: local support and knowledge linked to a network with a global presence.

Achievements

To date, up to 324,844 new volunteers have been recruited from the 42,000 or more barangays around the country. This covers 17 per cent of the total number of barangays selected for this exercise.

This recruitment drive has borne fruit in the past year whereby volunteers were on-site and at the ready to respond when Typhoon Fengshen struck the Philippines in June. Having received training in disaster management, health and blood services, volunteers were able to assume their positions of responsibility and act accordingly in an effective manner.

This time of emergency also served as an entry point for new volunteers to join in the PNRC efforts to respond and mitigate the after-effects of the disaster.

Toolkits and training

Despite the low funding response to the 2008-2009 annual appeal, work has continued nonetheless aided by emergency appeal funding which links directly to the training of volunteers. However, in order to keep costs as low and effective as possible, alternative methods of conveying information and skills have been explored and put into action.

The development of toolkits that are simple to use, visually eye-catching and highly informative was spearheaded by the PNRC's volunteer service office at the national headquarters in March 2008. A workshop which was participated by 15 chapters and various departments at the national headquarters, including disaster management, volunteer services, emergency response unit, common health and nursing, safety, social services, national blood programme, international humanitarian law, fund generation and chapter development.

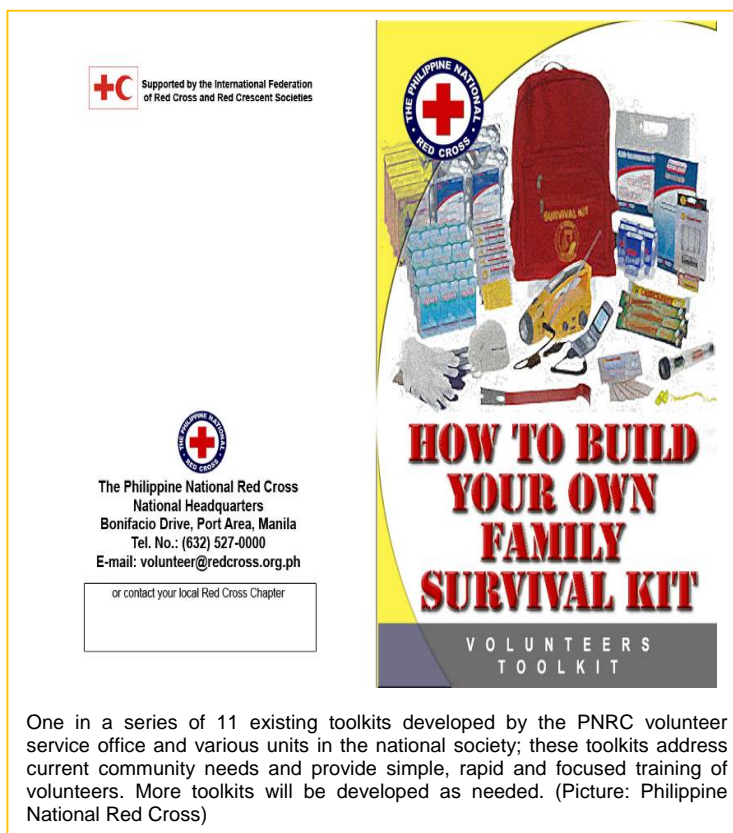
These toolkits were developed to fit with existing community needs and take into consideration best practices generated by PNRC in addressing those needs. Focus areas include the risk of dengue fever, malaria, promotion of better hygiene practices, improved mother and child health care, and basic disaster preparedness.

Each kit provides simple, focused and low-cost maintenance training to volunteers, enabling them to be trained within an hour and ready for community service concentrating on key life-saving actions and messages. For example, a malaria kit will explain that mosquitoes carry and spread the disease, and that they tend to breed in stagnant water. Instructions in the kit would then guide the volunteer in the clean-up of such pools.

Sent out in December 2008, these tool kits are currently being tested at all 93 chapters throughout the country, with an average of 10 sets per chapter. Chapter staff and volunteers choose and tailor suitable activities to the scale of their audiences, thereby testing the practicality and feasibility of the toolkits. This helps to enhance the relevance of activities from chapter to chapter, allowing an improvement in the quality of service delivery and allowing longer term positive change in the target communities.

Monitoring, feedback and evaluation will be done in 2009. Subsequently, new components such as pandemic preparedness will be added. It is planned that all these modules be combined into a single set, and then possibly translated into the local language. Present toolkits include:

- Volunteers' guide on how to use the toolkits
- How to build your own family survival kit
- How to prevent malaria in your community (inclusive of "how to use insecticide treated mosquito nets)
- How to prevent diarrhoea in your community (inclusive of "how to prevent cholera")
- How to prevent dengue fever (inclusive of "how to organize a clean-up campaign")
- How to promote voluntary blood donation
- How to organize Red Cross dissemination
- How to protect yourself from fire and its hazards







One in a series of 11 existing toolkits developed by the PNRC volunteer service office and various units in the national society; these toolkits address current community needs and provide simple, rapid and focused training of volunteers. More toolkits will be developed as needed. (Picture: Philippine National Red Cross)




- How to prevent accidents at home (home safety)
- How to prepare and protect yourself from landslides
- How to survive flash floods

Friendly Tips To Prevent Dengue Fever

How to Avoid Mosquito Bites:

- **Use mosquito repellants on skin and clothing.** 
- **When outdoors during times that mosquitoes are biting, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into socks.**
- **Avoid heavily populated residential areas.** 
- **When indoors, stay in areas with air-condition or with windows and door screens. Use bed nets if sleeping in areas without air-condition or without windows and door screens.** 

How to Eliminate Mosquito Breeding Sites: 

- **Cover water drums and water pails at all times to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.** 
- **Replace water in flower vases once a week.** 
- **Clean all water containers once a week. Scrub the sides well to remove eggs of mosquitoes sticking to the sides.** 

An example of practical and cost-effective information for rapid volunteer deployment when needed; monitoring and evaluation of these kits will be done in 2009. Plans to combine toolkits into suitable sets for different chapters and translation into local languages are also in progress. (Picture: Philippine National Red Cross)

This concept aims at training and management of new volunteers via a volunteer action and guidance programme. All actions will contribute towards establishing a safe community based on Red Cross Red Crescent Fundamental Principles. This will be utilized by volunteers as part of the preparedness and advocacy campaign at village level, and provide them with several meaningful activities per month, thus contributing to their activities within the community, and indirectly towards their retention as Red Cross volunteers.

In 2008, the PNRC trained key disaster management staff and volunteers at chapter-level to help strengthen the coping mechanisms and capacities of the most vulnerable communities. Focus was placed on community risk and resource mapping; and promoting disaster risk reduction and disaster response activities in the community. Selected chapter staff and volunteers conducted training in their respective barangays.

This included the integrated community disaster planning programme (ICDPP) applied by the PNRC, aimed at reducing the vulnerability of individual families and communities to natural hazards by providing communities with adequate knowledge on disaster management. The basic strategy of the ICDPP is the organization and training of local communities through the barangay disaster action team (BDAT).

A total of 15 barangays in three municipalities of Catanduanes province were recipients under the ICDPP whereby 15 BDATs with nine members each were organized and trained. Outputs of the BDATs included elaboration of barangay disaster action plans, and risk and resource mapping in their respective areas. In addition, participants received information on PNRC activities and the national society's principles, which led to their becoming Red Cross volunteers in their communities.

BDAT training materials are also being updated and there is anticipation of a scale-up in numbers and activities in this area once this is completed.

The national society's disaster management services aim to integrate a variety of functions and sectors including emergency and public health, water and sanitation, shelter, livelihoods and food security across overlapping phases of action.

Two stakeholder meetings were held in June and December 2008, hosted by the PNRC health and social service departments respectively. Their objectives were the development of cohesive approaches in response to frequently occurring disasters; generating a common understanding of the roots of vulnerability; exchanging lessons learnt from participants representing the national disaster coordination council (NDCC), department of health, department of social welfare, ICRC and other relevant players; identifying gaps; and defining strategies for future activities. The outcomes of workshops will be incorporated into the PNRC strategic planning document to be finalized in 2009.

These meetings were also attended by chapter administrators, enabling their involvement in the planning process. After group discussions and information exchanges with different stakeholders, these administrators were asked to identify and prioritize core activities that would have positive impact on the vulnerability of communities at risk, and which could possibly fill gaps identified through discussion with

other parties. Prioritized activities will help PNRC determine future directions and strategies for moving forward in delivering quality services to beneficiaries.

Operations centre

To better coordinate its disaster response efforts, PNRC set up an operations centre in Manila that has been working around the clock to monitor the consequences of the typhoons since September 2006. Realizing this centre can play an important role in the future, PNRC has also decided to maintain and further develop this initiative.

In 2008, proper office space and necessary equipment was allocated for the operations centre. With support from the International Federation, the national society refurbished the centre with four desktop computers and a photocopy machine.

Currently, the operations centre is on 24/7 standby and figures greatly in monitoring the consequences of disaster received through updates from PNRC chapter offices. In reciprocation, the operations centre sends early warning signals on anticipated weather disturbances to the chapter offices. This information is issued by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA). PNRC plans to expand the centre's role to include a coordination mechanism to enable the national society to support chapters to scale up activities during disasters. The International Federation will continue to support PNRC in this endeavour.

Constraints or Challenges

The main challenge that faced the implementation of programme work and capacity building under the 2008-2009 appeal was the lack of funding. While the PNRC enjoys the reputation of being a reliable progressive national society, this very reputation may work against it in addressing its outstanding needs. While the national society receives adequate multilateral funding support in emergency response efforts, it does not receive sufficient funding for its capacity building. This is unfortunate as the national society is constantly seeking to improve its organizational development, volunteer network and service delivery; steps that will ultimately affect its work in emergency situations.

One step that has been taken by the PNRC is by applying for intensified capacity building (ICB) support for which the national society has been shortlisted. A workshop in this respect has also been held whereby an experienced consultant spoke with members of the PNRC to further elaborate on what this funding is and what it entails. Following that, the national society has written a proposal which is currently under review and finalization by this consultant, and will be submitted to the ICB administrators.

Whatever reasons may exist, the PNRC needs support that allows it to expand its presence and efficiency in timely and quality service delivery.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The PNRC continues to work with the International Federation supported by emergency appeal funding. With the transfer of remaining funds from the now-closed 2006 Typhoons appeal, there will be better options for working with the national society on capacity building and programme work.

The PNRC initiative seeks to fulfil the third global agenda goal to increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability. Fulfilling this goal will help boost the national society's achievement of global agenda goals 1 and 2 as well. The initiative of Project 143 and its activities linked with disaster management and health provides the bigger picture that is achieved through focusing on organizational development, and commits PNRC to improving its volunteer service impact on the increasing number of vulnerable people at every level.

Looking ahead

The International Federation has maintained this appeal despite the lack of funding response, recognizing the need to support the PNRC through its international network of Red Cross Red Cross societies. While the national society continues to serve its communities and is recognized as a key player in the area of humanitarian aid, programme work and capacity building still rely heavily on international support. Failure to secure continued support in this country would mean the loss of certain core capacities. As such, more investment is required to strengthen the capacity of the Philippine national society in order to continue and

increase its capacity in providing quality, rapid and efficient services to its vulnerable communities, and subsequently, deliver successfully on the global agenda goals.

How we work

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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