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Saving Lives Changing Minds

The newsletter of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Pacific Regional Office



Welcome

A message from the International Federation

Dear partners,

Welcome to the 7th external edition of Saving Lives Changing Minds. In this edition you will read about the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) in the Pacific over the last six months – from disaster response to water and sanitation, first aid, community health and the empowerment of young women.

As Tropical Cyclone Haiyan made headlines in the Philippines, the Palau Red Cross Society was busy at work responding to the cyclone impact in their own community. A few months later, the Tonga Red Cross Society moved quickly to assess and assist the survivors of Cyclone Ian, and teams in the Cook Islands and Kiribati were supporting families affected by water shortages.

November 2013 was a crucial month for the Movement, with the General Assembly and Council of Delegates held in Sydney, Australia. With these global meetings being held in our region, it was an excellent opportunity for Pacific National Societies to showcase their work, and also draw attention to the specific vulnerabilities that can be found here. The decisions made at these fora have set important goals for the post-2015 development agenda.

I hope you enjoy the breadth and depth of activities presented here and that you are inspired by the power of humanity made evident through these stories.

- Aurélia Balpe, Head of Regional Office, Pacific, IFRC

The Movement in the Pacific

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is saving lives and changing minds across the Pacific, using its network of National Societies, coordinated by the IFRC and in partnership with the ICRC:

- Vanuatu Red Cross Society
- Tuvalu Red Cross Society (in formation)
- Tonga Red Cross Society
- Solomon Islands Red Cross
- Samoa Red Cross Society
- Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society
- Palau Red Cross Society
- New Zealand Red Cross
- Micronesia Red Cross
- Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (in formation)
- Kiribati Red Cross Society
- French Red Cross
- Fiji Red Cross Society
- Cook Islands Red Cross Society
- Australian Red Cross
- American Red Cross
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Major events

Learning on the job in Palau



Haiyan completely devastated island of Kayangel.

What was supposed to be disaster response training became all too real on 7 November 2013. Just as personnel from the IFRC, Australian Red Cross and Micronesia Red Cross had arrived in Palau to provide community disaster response team training, Typhoon Haiyan strengthened to a category five: the strongest to ever make landfall in Palau. The team quickly switched gear to response readiness: volunteers were placed on standby, communications equipment was tested and relief supplies and equipment were prepared for distribution. That night, with the city of Koror boarded up, many people across the country took shelter in evacuation centres. For Palauans it was a terrifying reminder of Typhoon Bopha that had caused so much destruction only 11 months earlier.

The following morning the damage looked severe, with numerous homes destroyed but no lives lost. Palau Red Cross Society staff and volunteers fanned out across the country to make an initial assessment of the damage and plan the emergency response operation. Over the coming days, 129 families received family kits of essential items including drinking water, tarpaulins, jerry cans, soap and towels, emergency lighting and cooking stoves. To the north of the country the island of Kayangel – once home to some 70 residents – had been completely devastated. The National Society dispatched relief supplies with the first helicopter to visit the area. Volunteers were on hand to provide support to the families who were evacuated by boat to a shelter in Koror, where they could take temporary residence while their homes and livelihoods were being restored.

Major events

Cook Islanders show their support



The Cook Islands Red Cross Society team ran a six-hour radio appeal to support first responders in Tonga. At the end of the day, pledges exceeded \$8,000 New Zealand dollars (6,000 Swiss francs) including large contributions from the Te tiare association of transgendered people (\$500) and the Staircase Restaurant and Bar (over \$500 raised from its door takings). Many donations were received from the outer islands, notably from Aitutaki which was hit by Cyclone Pat in 2009.

Becoming prepared



When Tropical Cyclone Ian arrived in Tonga, it reached communities that had worked hard to be prepared. The National Society and government authorities have cooperated since November 2012 to train village district leaders, establish and strengthen emergency response teams and promote disaster management plans.

TC Ian's path of destruction



Volunteers have distributed 100 tents and 500 tarpaulins to survivors.

Tonga has experienced its most powerful storm ever recorded, with 900 homes damaged or destroyed and more than 5,000 people affected. Severe Tropical Cyclone Ian formed on 6 January, tracking south-east towards the Tongan island groups of Vava'u (population 15,000) and Ha'apai (Population 6,016). It intensified to category five, with gusts of up to 300 kilometres per hour.

After receiving an alert from the Tonga Meteorological Services, the Tonga Red Cross Society asked the Vava'u and Ha'apai branches to put their emergency response teams on standby. The cyclone caused minor damage in Vava'u but in the north of the Ha'apai group it caused widespread damage to public and private property, food crops and infrastructure. Fortunately, only one death was recorded and a number of mostly minor injuries.

Teams were quickly deployed to assess the damage on the affected islands and provide immediate relief. They began by clearing roads and checking on residents' welfare. Due to damage to the communications infrastructure, Red Cross satellite phones and VHF radios were the only means of communication between Ha'apai airport, government ministries and community members and Nuku'alofa. To date, Red Cross volunteers have distributed blankets, hygiene kits, cooking sets, mosquito nets, 100 tents, 500 tarpaulins and tool kits to assist the repair of homes.

51 evacuation centres were established on the islands of Lifuka and Foa. Red Cross teams visited the survivors to share simple health messages for hygiene and sanitation and provide psychosocial support.

As the relief and recovery effort continues, Tonga Red Cross Society is grateful for the generous support of its community volunteers, local businesses, government ministries, the Australian and New Zealand High Commissions in Tonga, overseas Red Cross partners and other donors.

The officer in charge of the Ha'apai branch Luisa Palu remembers the arrival of TC Ian vividly. She was inside the emergency operations centre when the cyclone struck: "As the wind got stronger, we could hear trees falling on the building, lots of noises outside and it was clear to us we won't be safe if we remain in the Governor's office, we would get hurt". They ran to a nearby church, with iron roofing flying through the air. "We stayed inside for almost an hour. I can still see myself in the little store room, watching the cyclone ripping houses and breaking trees."

Major events

World First Aid Day 2013



Watch the video via <http://www.ifrc.org/first-aid-day>

Each year, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world celebrate World First Aid Day. In 2013, the day was celebrated on 14 September. Pacific National Societies marked this year's World First Aid Day with events advocating road safety awareness.

The Australian Red Cross supported Pacific National Society activities, with a grants facility of 24,000 Australian dollars (20,500 Swiss francs) distributed among six successful National Societies. This year, the funds were awarded to Kiribati, Samoa, Fiji, Micronesia, Cook Islands and Vanuatu Red Cross Societies.

Targeting drivers

The Fiji Red Cross Society collaborated with the Fiji Police Force and Land Transport Authority to celebrate World First Aid Day. As part of the celebrations, Fiji Red Cross trained 20 government drivers and 20 community drivers from Suva on first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. On the same day, the Fiji Red Cross Society's Lautoka Branch educated school children on road safety.

Samoa students prepared



On 13 September the Samoa Red Cross Society ran a primary school first aid competition. Students from ten primary schools on Savai'i and Upolu islands showcased their first aid skills: handling unconscious victims, external bleeding, nose bleeds, fractures and dislocation. Placing an unconscious victim into the recovery position was an extra skill for the competition. The main aim of this year's event was to ensure that young students who assist as traffic controllers by the roadside hold the necessary first aid skills.



Reaching out to Kosrae

The Micronesia Red Cross Society teamed up with the Kosrae State Police Department to conduct training and awareness on first aid and road safety. The activities took place in all four municipalities, and the remote village of Walung. National Society and police department visited the five main public elementary schools to conduct road safety awareness for students and first aid training for teachers. In the afternoon after each school visit, Red Cross conducted road safety awareness in the community and first aid training for volunteers. The V6AJ Radio Station hosted a radio program for Red Cross, free of charge, to raise awareness. As a result of the campaign, more than 100 people signed up to become volunteers and 40 people were certified in First Aid. Road safety messages reached more than 3000 people – almost half the of the state's population.

Major events

Statutory meetings a success



Australian Red Cross president Michael Legge and CEO Robert Tickner applaud the resolution to eliminate nuclear weapons, passed at the first session of the Council of Delegates meeting.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Statutory Meetings closed on 18 November 2013 in Sydney. The meetings brought together more than 1,000 delegates from 189 countries, including over 50 Pacific delegates (the largest Pacific delegation ever to attend these meetings). These Statutory Meetings are held every two years and set the global strategic direction for the Movement. This is the first time that these Statutory Meetings have been held in the Pacific region.

The IFRC declared three commitments on the post-2015 development agenda:

- Every community in a high risk area will have the capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters
- A volunteer in every community will be responsible for facilitating access to basic health services
- Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies will be trusted partners and effective auxiliaries to their governments in humanitarian and development work

The declaration also places emphasis on the ethical use of technology and innovation in advancing sustainable development. The General Assembly endorsed a revised set of principles and rules aimed at improving coordination between the IFRC secretariat and National Societies.

Mr Tadateru Konoé from Japan was re-elected to a second term as president of the IFRC. At the end of the General Assembly delegates endorsed the youth engagement strategy (Y.E.S.), which speaks to the role of young people in building strong National Societies and promoting community resilience, as well as the importance of their participation as leaders at all levels of the organization from governance to management to service delivery. The IFRC's General Assembly welcomed the Cyprus Red Cross Society and the South Sudan Red Cross Society who became the 188th and 189th members of the IFRC.

Election outcomes:

President of the IFRC: Mr Tadateru Konoé

Vice-presidents: Mr Abbas Gullet, Kenya, for the Africa region
Mr Osvaldo M. Ferrero, Argentina, for the Americas
Dr Baige Zhao, China, for Asia Pacific
Mr Francesco Rocca, Italy, for Europe.

Twenty National Societies were elected as members of the governing board, with five National Societies represented from each IFRC zone. Congratulations to Mr Nitin Ghandi, President of Fiji Red Cross for his election to the governing board.

See more



To view more photographs from the meetings, go to: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ifrc/sets/72157637872604984/>
To read the resolutions and workshop outcomes in full, visit <http://www.rcrcmeetings.org/news/media/outcomes-and-resolutions/>

Pacific leaders re-group



Just before the statutory events, from 6–9 November, Pacific Red Cross leaders held their regional meetings in Sydney. The Pacific governance enhancement programme working group met to discuss the outcomes from the three-year review of the initiative and to define the way forward. Presidents and secretaries general had their closed meeting, the outcomes of which informed the day of strategic discussions with the IFRC regional office. This was followed by two days of policy dialogue hosted by New Zealand Red Cross in preparation for the General Assembly and Council of Delegates. Resolutions made by the group include efforts toward increasing financial autonomy, volunteering development, a regional strategic framework on climate change, preparing for the Small Islands Developing States Conference in Samoa in 2014 and stronger peer support between National Societies.

Reaching further

Action on Kiribati water shortages



The National Society assisted drought-affected families in South Tarawa, and hope to reach more communities.

Kiribati Red Cross has collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services for a one week health promotion campaign for communities affected by shortages of potable water in South Tarawa and Betio. The most affected communities are those living at the coastal areas where the ground water is salty, who do not have water tanks or access to public water supplies. Many parts of Kiribati received little or no rain in the second half of 2013.

The 388 households and 1600 people from the remote Temaiku on South Tarawa received emergency items, including 388 buckets and 292 jerry cans. The containers are intended to help each household to store boiled drinking water.

The activities followed detailed community need assessments in the three communities most vulnerable to drought and sea level rise. Visiting each community and meeting with community groups in their respective maneaba community house has given the National Society the required information to develop a plan for the next steps. The Kiribati Red Cross Society welcomes support from partners to help them reach a larger number of affected communities.

Shortages in the Cooks



With an increase in family members returning to celebrate the festive season, residents of Atiu Island found themselves unable to cope with the demand for fresh water. In cooperation with the National Disaster Council, the Cook Islands Red Cross Society responded with the NOMAD water purification unit. The emergency response team purified and distributed clean water to the 466 residents. The water was transported in 416 refillable 10- and 20-litre containers provided by the New Zealand Red Cross.

Reaching further

Water catchments delivered to Namu atoll



Water tanks are loaded to MV Kwajalein.

On 22 November, the MV Kwajalein set sail from Majuro, carrying the IFRC drought response team and more than 20 tanks and guttering sets, bound for Namu Atoll in the Marshall Islands.. "It's great to see this finally happening, after all of our hard work," said Ana Zarkovic, IFRC delegate for early recovery, water and sanitation, "the communities on Namu are ready to help with installation and we will be conducting hygiene promotion and awareness for maintaining the catchments in good condition, so they provide a lasting benefit."

The tanks and gutters were supplied under an agreement between the IFRC and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SOPAC), with funding from the European Union. The IFRC is procuring additional tanks, gutters and other catchment materials to support families on Likiep Atoll and Mejit Island in the coming months.

A National Society is born



National volunteers group leader Dr Pinano and member Fred Nysta celebrate recognition with IFRC representative Victoria Bannon.

26 November 2013 will be remembered as the day the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society was officially recognized. The Speaker of the Nitijela (National Parliament) gave the final signature needed for the Red Cross Recognition Act to enter into force. "It's a great day for the Marshall Islands," said Dr Pinano, leader of the national volunteers group involved in the formation of the National Society. "After two years and seven months of effort, we are here. But it's just the beginning, the real work still lies ahead of us."

Reaching further

Supplies reach Paama Island



The Vanuatu Red Cross Society mobilized the local community to support flood affected families.

On 24 October 2013 the Island of Paama in Malampa Province experienced flooding and a landslide, affecting 400 households. The Vanuatu Red Cross Society responded quickly with tarpaulins, relief items and gardening kits. Months later, affected families continue to recover from their losses. The National society mobilized public donations and contributed their own funds, to charter a shipment of clothing and kitchen sets from Port Vila to Paama on 8 January.

Sirus Ulas, the chair of the society's newly-established Paama branch acknowledged the tremendous support to his community, and the positive step toward setting up the branch on the island. He confirmed that relief supplies have been distributed to schools and the most affected families, who have lacked sufficient food and clothing since the disaster.

The National Society works hard to secure funds for small-scale disaster response, which is often not covered by international partners. There are many challenges transporting people, equipment and relief stocks to remote parts of the archipelago.

Tuvalu tarps on standby



The Tuvalu Red Cross Society now has enough tarpaulins to cover 15% of households.

As cyclone season approaches the Pacific, each Red Cross National Society reviews and improves its readiness. In 2013 the New Zealand Red Cross donated 450 tarpaulins to the Tuvalu Red Cross Society, enough to cover 15% of households in the country. With additional support from the Embassy of Japan to build emergency relief shelters on the outer islands, Secretary General Tataua Pese is pleased with their progress: "Thanks to our partners, we are well on our way to meeting one of our major objectives - to ensure community access to emergency supplies and resources in disaster situations."

Reaching further

Working every day

Red Cross National Societies form a vital part of the social fabric. They provide a focal point for community members to volunteer, share resources, reflect upon the issues that are important to them, and make gestures small and large that can improve the wellbeing of the most vulnerable.

Books for students



The Vanuatu Red Cross Society provided a collection of books and reading materials to Teouma bush primary school. The books were donated by individuals, organizations and groups within Vanuatu and abroad. The National Society had conducted an assessment of the most vulnerable communities around Port Vila and beyond. Youth program officer Xavier Watt was disappointed by the conditions he saw in schools: "Many vulnerable children will write for a week on an A4 paper shared with two school mates. With these new materials, the kids will have a good opportunity to study, read and write."

For a nuclear free world



Pacific National Societies hosted oratory competitions for secondary schools students. The subject of the competition was: "From a Nuclear Free Pacific to a Nuclear Free World". The winner of the regional competition, Zakkiya Ali from Suva Muslim College in Fiji, travelled to the Sydney to speak at the humanitarian forum of the 2013 International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement statutory meetings.

Curbing influenza



On 13 December 2013, the Micronesia Red Cross Society donated 60 buckets to the Primary Health Care Division of Pohnpei State Department of Health Services. The chief of the division had requested the assistance to provide hygiene education for students from 30 elementary schools in Pohnpei. The children learned the two-bucket hand-washing method to help contain further spread of an influenza outbreak in Pohnpei, the country's capital.

Help on children's day



Vanuatu Red Cross Volunteers celebrated Vanuatu youth and children's day with a march, a hygiene campaign, and visits to the children's ward at the Port Vila Central Hospital. The National Society's campaign focuses on vulnerable families who live in overcrowded conditions where influenza, hepatitis A and infectious diarrhoea can spread quickly. Volunteers demonstrate the importance of washing hands after visiting the toilet, before preparing food and after meals. Following the parade, volunteers continued to the hospital and distributed toys, clothing and cake to children who had been unable to join the celebrations.

Reaching further

From New Zealand to Burundi



Corinne Ambler/New Zealand Red Cross

Helena Okongo Tambwe with New Zealand Red Cross aid worker Chelsea Giles-Hansen in Bwagiriza refugee camp.

Helena Okongo Tambwe has a sadness about her, and when she starts to speak about her life, the reasons why become obvious. The solo mother of four young children lives in a refugee camp in Burundi. She was abandoned by her husband, her mother is dead, and her brother missing. She is one of 24,000 Congolese refugees currently in Burundi.

In 2013 Helena was part of a menstrual hygiene management programme that she says has changed her life. Run by New Zealand Red Cross water and sanitation aid worker Chelsea Giles-Hansen, the pilot programme was rolled out to 2,000 women in Bwagiriza camp. The programme uses kits that contain disposable or reusable sanitary pads, along with soap to wash them, rope and pegs to hang them out to dry, underwear, and a bucket. It's hoped the programme will reduce the rate of infections among the women. It is about to be trialled with women in Somalia, Madagascar and Uganda, with the long term aim of adding it to the IFRC's global Emergency Relief Items Catalogue.

Helena is pleased she no longer has to tear up her children's clothes for sanitary pads. "Before Chelsea's programme I would wear old pieces of cloth. They were not absorbent, which caused a lot of bruising, irritation and infection." She is thankful to the people whose donations make Chelsea's job possible, and says she is keen for her story to be told.

Empowering young women



The Vanuatu Red Cross Society will run four workshops over the course of a year.

On 26 October the Vanuatu Red Cross Society launched a new pilot project: Empowering Vanua Malagwelo (Malagwelo means 'young woman' in Ambae dialect). It will target 48 girls, aged 15-17, with four workshops throughout the year.

The project aims to provide girls with a basic education on health, first aid, children's rights and child protection. Workshops will also cover climate change and disaster risks, banking and small business opportunities and growing vegetable gardens.

The vice president of the National Society, Monica Croccolo said that this is the first project of its kind in Vanuatu: "our goal is to help participants strengthen their role within their families and communities by realizing their rights against domestic violence and harassment, and providing the skills that will encourage self-confidence, which will in turn offer them a brighter future". The official launch was attended by representatives from the Government of Switzerland, one of the project's major donors.

Reaching further

Communities lead health improvements



Australian Red Cross is working with three National Societies to support good health in communities.

The goal of the Pacific Regional Community Based Health Program is to improve health and wellbeing for communities in Fiji, the Cook Islands and Federated States of Micronesia. Supported by the Australian Red Cross, the program avoids deciding on any outcomes before work starts. Each country's Red Cross will respond to the needs identified by community members. Areas of focus will be broad ranging, tackling challenges from water and sanitation to safe motherhood and non-communicable diseases. The initiative includes funding for staff members in each of the National Societies, and a regional health delegate based in Suva.

Across Fiji Red Cross' branches, the program has focused on dialogue and staff resources. IFRC's Community Based Health and First Aid and Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) approaches are being adapted to the Fiji context. A key priority is developing Fiji Red Cross' capacity to work with communities in more participatory ways.

"The program has the right fundamentals for sustainability within communities. If they are stakeholders from the inception of the program then they will take ownership. With strong connection to branches continuity can be guaranteed and resilient healthy communities built."

-- Filipe Nainoca
Director General of the Fiji Red Cross Society

Family reunited after 13 years



With help from the Australian Red Cross, Samuel was reunited with his son and daughter after 13 years.

On 5th January 1999 Samuel* left his home and two children to work in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone in West Africa. During his shift, violence erupted in the city, and the hospital where he worked was attacked.

Unable to return home because of the siege and escalating violence, Samuel fled to nearby Ghana. He lost contact with his children during this time. After spending seven years in a refugee camp in Ghana, Samuel was granted a visa to come to Australia.

In Australia, Samuel approached the Australian Red Cross tracing service to help find his children. A request to the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society located his two children now aged 16 and 17. For the first time in many years, Samuel was able to call his children directly and know they were safe. Nobody slept that night, he told Australian Red Cross. "We were just talking," he said. "They were crying and talking".

**Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual.*

Expanded acceptance criteria

The Australian Red Cross has recently broadened its tracing criteria to accept cases where loss of contact was caused by migration, in addition to those separated by conflict and disaster.

Help for the Pacific



The Australian Red Cross provides technical support for Pacific National Societies to develop their Restoring Family Links services.

Partnership in action

Early warning in Fiji



Village disaster response committees participate in training in Labassa

The Fiji Red Cross Society has won a 55,000 Fiji dollar grant (36,000 Swiss francs) to promote early warning systems in vulnerable communities. The Fiji Red Cross Society will use the funds to support up to six communities in the country's Northern Division. The activities will be implemented by village disaster committees, encouraging the people responsible to be more proactive within their communities, working with the villagers to practice their plans in the lead up to each cyclone and flooding season.

The Red Cross disaster team will work with the communities to identify safe routes, evacuation sites and install rain gauges. Village disaster committees will be provided with safety vests, megaphones, whistles and helmets. Local communities will be trained to respond to warning signals and support the most vulnerable members to reach safety.

The grants were awarded by the Asia Foundation and are supported by the United States Agency for the International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) under the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Programme (PDRMP-2).

Managing risks in Samoa

The Samoa Red Cross Society has continued its work on community disaster and climate risk management. With the assistance of the Government of Samoa and the Australian Red Cross, the project has collected baseline data, established village response teams and trained the teams to carry out their roles. Community leaders have begun the process of identifying evacuation centres and putting resources into preparedness. Project teams have installed two 10,000 litre communal water tanks for seven vulnerable villages in Savaii and four in Upolu. The Samoa Red Cross Society plans to support 50 villages by the end of 2014.

Christchurch grants change young lives



Aranui High students enjoy their first ball since the 2011 earthquake devastated their hometown.

Aranui was one of the suburbs hardest hit by the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. Due to the amount of damage to the school and homes of students and staff, funding a ball has been impossible – until the school received a Christchurch Schoolchildren's Grant from New Zealand Red Cross. The money enabled Aranui to fund a school leavers' ball, attended by 100 students and staff. It was held in August and had 'A Night in Paris' as its theme.

School principal John Rohs says the ball was the highlight of the year for senior students, who were very disappointed that it had to be cancelled for the last two years. "It meant a lot to the students to be able to have a ball this year," he says.

The \$9.3 million Christchurch Schoolchildren's Grant was launched by the New Zealand Red Cross 2011 Earthquake Commission in February from donations is received after the Christchurch earthquake. It is designed to support primary and secondary schoolchildren experiencing earthquake-related challenges that impact on their health and wellbeing.

Grants by numbers:

- 179 grant applications approved
- 61,000 young people have benefited
- \$1.1 million New Zealand dollars allocated to counselling and psychosocial support
- \$2 million to respond to individual hardship
- \$1.38 million to encouraging coping and resilience
- \$1.82 million for wellbeing-focused initiatives
- \$297,000 to support new entrants and school leavers

Partnership in action

Promoting respect for IHL in the Pacific



Parliamentarians read copies of the IHL handbook during the Solomon Islands launch.



In the Federated States of Micronesia, Secretary General Sizue Yoma speaks at the official launch event.

While the five handbooks contain common messages about International Humanitarian Law, local context is crucial. Each handbook has been adapted for the governments in the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Cook Islands, FSM and Papua New Guinea to demonstrate the relevance of IHL in each country.

Five Pacific National Societies have published their own 'handbook for parliamentarians' as part of ongoing work by Red Cross across the Pacific to highlight the importance of international humanitarian law (IHL).

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement works with governments to ensure that the principle of humanity is considered by policy makers and those who use IHL in their operations. The handbooks, developed in partnership with the Australian Red Cross and the ICRC, will be an important resource for Pacific National Societies as they carry out this work. They answer key questions about IHL, explain the role of parliamentarians, and outline the international treaties that protect civilians in war and limit the use of weapons.

The President of the Solomon Islands Red Cross, Charles Kelly, said that the handbook made a significant contribution towards promoting respect for IHL: "Parliament has a critical role to play in enacting legislation that ensures international humanitarian law is legally binding throughout the Solomon Islands," he said at the handbook's launch.



In Samoa, parliamentarians receive the message: 'even wars have laws.'

Equipped with knowledge of IHL, parliamentarians and legislators will be able to ensure that the military and wider community have an understanding and respect for the laws of war.

Partnership in action

Red Cross Red Crescent learning platform

The Red Cross Red Crescent learning platform provides online courses to Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers and staff to support the development of basic, core competencies. Various courses were launched on the Red Cross Red Crescent Learning platform. These include:

- Community-based health and first aid
- Psychosocial support & restoring family links
- Volunteer induction
- Volunteer stay safe

In 2014 a number of new programs will be launched:

- Climate Change
- Monitoring & Evaluation course (to follow-on from the Project Programme Planning course)
- National Society Development
- Personal Development (CEGOS)

Closing dates for major courses in 2014:

- Disaster Management: Applications will close on 3 March
- Social and Voluntary Sector Leadership: May
- Global Health: 31 July
- Humanitarian Diplomacy: August

The learning platform

- Visit: www.ifrc.org/learning-platform
- The global Learning community has reached 100,000 users on the learning platform
- There are Red Cross and Red Crescent users from all 189 National Societies on the platform
- More National Societies are translating existing courses and adding their own courses onto the learning platform

A step forward for safer access



The ICRC convened the workshop on work in sensitive and insecure environments.

Representatives of National Societies and the IFRC attended a safer access consultation workshop in Nadi in October 2013, run by the ICRC. The workshop aimed to develop a structured approach to meeting the challenges of operating in sensitive and insecure environments, drawing on the experience and good practice of National Societies. The workshop included a simulation exercise with workshop participants, Fiji Red Cross Society volunteers and the Fiji military forces. The workshop focused on holistic capacity building around safer access. It also enabled the group to identify committed National Societies to pilot the safer access framework and build a plan of action in 2014 and 2015. The pilot National Societies will first work on a gap analysis with support from Movement partners.

Partnership in action

Ground-breaking ceremony



The president of the National Society (centre) and members of parliament break ground at the ceremony in Apia.

The Samoa Red Cross Society is soon to build a new warehouse and headquarters building. Since it was founded 61 years ago, the National Society has struggled for space. Following the 2009 tsunami and 2013 Cyclone Evan response, relief containers have been stored on non-Red Cross land.

The ground-breaking ceremony took place on 12 September. The new headquarters will provide new administrative offices for the Society and will also include training facilities for staff and volunteers. The warehouse will enable the centralization of relief aid and storage of equipment. This project demonstrates the enduring partnership between the Samoa Red Cross Society, the Government of Samoa and development partners.

Water system opens in Mota Lava



Children celebrate the opening of their new gravity-fed water system.

On 28 November 2013 in Vanuatu's Torba Province, the population of Mota Lava celebrated the official opening of their newly built gravity-fed water system. The 9.5 kilometre-long infrastructure will provide water to 1,450 people in five communities through 20 tap stands. The facility is able to provide 45 litres per person per day. Residents were trained to participate in the construction effort and to maintain and repair it in the future. Water sub-committees were set up in the five communities supplied by the water system.

The event was attended by Vanuatu and French Red Cross teams, community leaders and representatives of the government and corporate partner Union Electrique du Vanuatu Limited (UNELCO). Community leaders, area council secretaries and water committee representatives signed a handover document from the Red Cross.

Funded by the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and UNELCO, this project will help people from Mota Lava to cope with the regular drought periods experienced each year.

Sponsored by:



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