



SEA Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies - IFRC engagement with ASEAN

4th September 2024

Health in Emergencies Overview

Common Threads of Activity

The collaboration between ASEAN and National Societies in Southeast Asia has developed a targeted approach to addressing health emergencies, with a strong emphasis on areas such as first aid, disease prevention, and pandemic preparedness. Both ASEAN and National Societies share the objective of strengthening the region's capacity to respond to health-related crises, particularly those arising from disasters.

National Society Activities

- **Online First Aid Training Program:** The Thai Red Cross Society has transitioned First Aid training to online platforms, significantly broadening access. This move has been particularly impactful in remote areas, ensuring that a greater number of individuals are equipped with life-saving skills, which contributes to enhanced community resilience in emergencies.
- **Inclusive Immunization Campaigns:** Focused on vaccinating marginalized groups, including those without identification documents, these campaigns are vital in reducing the spread of preventable diseases, ultimately lowering public health risks.
- **Establishment of WASH Facilities in Disaster-Affected Areas:** The ongoing establishment of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities by the Philippine Red Cross is critical in preventing the spread of waterborne diseases in disaster-stricken regions, improving overall health outcomes by ensuring access to clean water and sanitation.
- **Psychosocial Support in Emergencies:** By providing psychosocial first aid to staff, volunteers, and affected communities, this initiative addresses mental health needs,

significantly aiding in reducing trauma and supporting the well-being of those impacted by disasters.

- **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Integration:** Integrating MHPSS into primary and emergency health services, the Indonesian Red Cross ensures comprehensive care during emergencies, fostering mental health recovery and resilience among both the population and responders.
- **Community Health Promotion for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs):** Targeting issues like stunting and mental health, this initiative promotes healthier practices through community engagement, thereby reducing the long-term burden of NCDs in the region.
- **HIV/AIDS Awareness and Health Promotion:** The Laos Red Cross emphasizes health promotion with a focus on HIV/AIDS awareness, aiming to reduce stigma and promote safer practices, which is key to lowering infection rates and improving health outcomes.
- **World First Aid Day Events:** These events involve teachers, students, and the public in first aid awareness, preparing more people to respond effectively in emergencies and enhancing community resilience.

Complementary ASEAN Initiatives

- **ASEAN Health Monitoring Center (AHMC):** The ASEAN Health Monitoring Center established in 2009, plays a crucial role in monitoring and analyzing health data across Southeast Asia, providing timely alerts that enable member states to respond swiftly to emerging health threats, thereby reducing the potential impact of outbreaks.
- **ASEAN Health Sector Cooperation (AHSC):** Facilitates collaboration among member states in responding to health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, enhancing regional coordination and resource sharing, which improves the effectiveness of public health strategies.
- **ASEAN Dengue Prevention and Control Program:** This program focuses on reducing the burden of dengue by improving surveillance and control efforts, leading to better-prepared health systems and more effective interventions across Southeast Asia.
- **ASEAN Strategic Framework for Public Health Emergencies:** Developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this framework outlines ASEAN's approach to managing public health emergencies, strengthening regional preparedness and ensuring a more resilient response to future crises.



Potential Joint Activities

- **Joint Disaster Response Exercises:** These exercises aim to enhance coordination and interoperability among National Societies and ASEAN member states, improving disaster response effectiveness.
- **Standardized Operating Procedures (SOPs):** Developing SOPs for emergency logistics, communication, and field operations can reduce confusion and enhance operational effectiveness during health emergencies.
- **Capacity Building Initiatives:** Joint training programs, workshops, and simulations will strengthen the skills and knowledge of disaster response personnel, particularly in areas like first aid and emergency planning.
- **Resource Mobilization:** Coordinating fundraising and resource allocation efforts to secure the necessary resources for disaster response and recovery.
- **Knowledge Sharing Platforms:** Establishing forums and networks for exchanging best practices and lessons learned from previous health emergencies will improve regional response strategies.