

Final Evaluation Report

“Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction in Westbank and Gaza” project



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Project Implementation Phase: 1st October 2013 – 31st December 2016

Field phase of the evaluation: 6th December 2016 – 18th December 2016

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Table of Content

Executive Summary	1
Short project description.....	1
Key questions of the evaluation	2
Key findings	4
Recommendations	6
Introduction - Key data of the evaluation	7
The project context	7
Project description	7
Purpose and scope of the evaluation.....	8
Evaluation design and methodology	8
Concepts and Definitions	10
Findings	10
Relevance (Pertinence/Utility)	10
Effectiveness.....	17
Efficiency	34
Impact.....	35
Sustainability & Connectedness	35
Coherence	38
Conclusions with regard to resilience programming	39
Recommendations	40
Bibliography.....	42
Annexes	43
Annex 1: Terms of Reference	43
Annex 2: Evaluation schedule	54
Annex 3: Agendas for discussion with interlocutors	56
3.1 PRCS management and HQ	56
3.2 PRCS branch level	59
3.3 Community Level.....	62
3.4 School level.....	63
Annex 4: Data compilation	65
4.1 VCA report analysis.....	65
4.2 Overview of training figures	68
4.3 DMC analysis	69
4.4 Overview on school related activities	71
Annex 5: Photo documentation of the micro-projects	73

Abbreviations

BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBDRR	Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction
CBFA	Community Based First Aid
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CW	Community Work
DCD	Department for Civil Defence of the Ministry of Internal Affairs
DM	Disaster Management
DMC	Disaster Management Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
FA	First Aid
FR	First Responder
Gol	Government of Israel
GRC	German Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
MoE	Ministry of Education
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
PA	Palestinian National Authority
PM	Project Management
PRCS	Palestine Red Crescent Society
RCRC	Red Cross Red Crescent
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VC	Volunteer Coach
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

Executive Summary

Short project description

Life in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) is marred by the unsolved conflict between Israel and Palestine: military occupation, geopolitical fragmentation, domestic insecurity, armed clashes and persistent severe restrictions on the movement of people and goods have been causing recurrent humanitarian emergencies for many years. Israel's settlement policy in the occupied West Bank and the economic blockade of the Gaza Strip are causing significant disruptions in basic services which affect health care, water supply, sanitation, waste management and other municipal services. As a consequence of the persistent conflict situation, however, disaster management in the OPT emanates from a culture of response rather than prevention: disaster management focuses first and foremost on the provision of timely emergency aid. National disaster management is the responsibility of the Palestinian Civil Defence Directorate created under the umbrella of the ministry of the interior. But internal political insecurity and the restricted right to self-government in the OPT are also hampering the development of governmental DRR structures from national down to municipal level. Equipped with a comprehensive network of EMS centres, branches and volunteers, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) is the main provider of relief services during and after disasters and the only organisation to have decentralised community-based structures throughout the OPT for the time being. The involvement of PRCS in community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) started in 2009. The project to be evaluated was designed by PRCS and GRC in 2013, accommodating previous experiences with earlier CBDRR programming in the OPT. The project rationale based on an analysis of the framework conditions in the OPT and its implications for vulnerable groups of the population.

The **“Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) in Westbank and Gaza”** project (Nablus, Deir-Al Balah, Bethlehem), called **CBDRR II**, was approved by the donor, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), with a term of October 2013 to December 2016 (39 months) and a total BMZ grant amounting 500.000 EUR. Later the project was extended until January 2017.

The CBDRR II project aimed to improve the capacities, the coping mechanisms and the resilience of the beneficiary communities, the local authorities and the PRCS in order to enable them to better mitigate and cope with the impact of crises and disasters. The project targeted around 6.000 families with around 36.000 beneficiaries. It was implemented in three governorates (Nablus, Deir-Al Balah, and Bethlehem) with each five communities totalling to a total number of 15 project communities. In 2013, the governorate of Nablus replaced hereby the original location of Hebron with the consent of the BMZ. In 2014, the community of Al Rashaydeh (Bethlehem) was replaced by the community of Wadi Rahal (Bethlehem) due to a lack of community participation in Al Rashaydeh. In 2015, the BMZ approved an amendment to the initial proposal and granted an additional 150.000 EUR of project funds, that were made available to

- strengthen the response capacities of the PRCS branches and the PRCS HQ by procuring relief supplies and equipment for PRCS branches and the PRCS HQ.
- increase the budget for micro-mitigation-project on community level.

Thus the project grant of the BMZ was raised to 650.000 EUR.

The project was implemented by PRCS through its Disaster Management Department until June 2016 and from July 2016 until January 2017 through PRCS's new Community Works Department.

The **project goal**:

Having improved their capacities, coping mechanisms and resilience, the beneficiary communities, local authorities and PRCS in West Bank and in Gaza are better able to mitigate and cope with the impact of crises and disasters.

Under the project goal, **4 results** were expected to be achieved:

1. Supported by PRCS and in close consultation with local authorities, communities in West Bank and the Gaza Strip have developed organisational structures with a view to implementing community-based DRR activities. Furthermore, the response capacities of the PRCS branches and the PRCS HQ are strengthened.
2. Interacting closely with local authorities, the beneficiary communities have worked out and implemented a plan of action for risk reduction.
3. The beneficiaries have community-based first aid skills and are able to apply them in emergencies.
4. Teachers and students of the beneficiary schools have basic disaster preparedness skills and respond accordingly in emergencies.

Key questions of the evaluation

The **main focus** of the End-of-Project evaluation was to examine the extent to which the goal, objectives and expected results of the CBDRR II project were achieved during the three years implementation period in terms of **effectiveness and relevance** to the needs of beneficiaries.

The evaluation was conducted along the following set of key questions defined in the ToR:

Relevance (Pertinence/Utility)

- To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid?
- Are the project activities + outputs consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its specific objective? In particular: of risk charts, communal contingency plans, and simulations carried out in the target communities.
- Are the project activities + outputs consistent with the intended impacts and effects?
- Are the outputs/outcomes consistent with the beneficiary actual needs?

Effectiveness

- To what extent are the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
- What are major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- To what extent could the intended target group be reached?

Efficiency

- Are activities cost-efficient?
- Are objectives achieved on time?
- Is the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

Impact

- What has happened as a result of the project and why?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- In how far had the intervention influence on the resilience of the beneficiaries?
- How many people were reached?

- What would have happened without the activity?

Sustainability & Connectedness

- To what extent will the benefits of the project continue after donor funding ceased?
- In how far are activities linked/ connected to other future action and actors?
- Is the contribution to resilience of beneficiaries sustainable?
- Which measures are implemented to achieve sustainability?
- What are major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?

Coherence

- To what extent are policies of different concerned actors in the intervention complementary or contradictory?
- Have the 7 RCRC principles been respected during the implementation?
- Are there any political consequences following the action that were not intended?

Key findings

Relevance

The project benefits remain **highly relevant** for the target groups, especially for the communities. They face recurrent hazards while external support from public authorities and others to address their vulnerabilities is weak and limited. In absence of such supportive and reliable external infrastructure, it is of utmost importance to build and strengthen self-help capacities on community level that contribute to DRR.

Effectiveness

The project has **achieved** to attain the intended **project goal** and related **results**.

The capacities for disaster response on the levels of communities, PRCS branches and HQ are improved. All communities accomplished to start rather successful CBDRR processes, although some opportunities have been missed. The VCA processes were conducted successfully and led to the implementation of first meaningful steps to mitigate or reduce prioritized risks (micro-projects). With the DMCs each community established mandated bodies in charge of CBDRR including preparedness for response in their communities. Through their membership composition, all DMCs are strongly linked with the public authorities and PRCS.

The project raised awareness of the communities for DRR issues and trained a significant share of the population in CBFA. The school component raised the local capacity for responding to emergencies through FA.

The validity of these conclusions is framed by an uncertainty, caused by a significant lack of monitoring data for analysis that could not be substituted during the evaluation process:

Neither the representativeness of the CBDRR process for the communities as a whole and especially for most vulnerable groups could be assessed to a sufficient extent, nor could the quality and substance of community outreach sessions on awareness raising on DRR and CBFA.

Efficiency

The evaluator rates the project as **cost-efficient**. The project applied a community-based approach, based on voluntary services from within the target communities. Hence staff costs were limited to necessary managerial positions in PRCS. PRCS was able to contribute a number of services free of charge or at reduced rates and could use their available facilities to support the communities without having to invest into necessary project management infrastructure.

The **managerial efficiency** though leaves **room for improvements**. Certain activities, like the development of community contingency plans, were not completed on time, while other planned activities that could have helped to foster the quality of the CBDRR process, like a community DRR plan or drills, were not implemented at all. Although these shortcomings might be caused to a certain extent by the structural changes within PRCS HQ, the evaluator considers another factor as crucial for not having been able to manage the project efficiently to the full extent. The project did not apply an impact and performance oriented management approach. If the project set qualified indicators related to representativeness of the VCA process for instance, a systematic monitoring would have produced data to assess to what extent the CBDRR activities addressed the communities needs as a whole. A performance oriented management approach is furthermore constituent for timely management interventions into a project in case of occurring challenges, shortcomings or delays. The evaluator assumes that the application of a performance-oriented monitoring approach could have helped to use the potential of the approach to a higher extent and therefore to increase managerial efficiency.

Impact

At the time of the evaluation, the capacities for disaster response on the levels of communities, PRCS branches and HQ are improved. With the DMCs each community has mandated bodies in charge of CBDRR including preparedness for response in their communities that are strongly linked with the public authorities and PRCS. These linkages ensure strong coordination with the authorities and the major DM provider in country, PRCS, in the event of a disaster. The public awareness for hazards and DRR issues is raised and a significant share of the population is skilled in CBFA. In the targeted schools, the capacity for responding to emergencies through FA is raised. The successful implementation of the micro-projects led in all communities to a mitigation or reduction of particular prioritized risks and therefore improved the living conditions in the communities. These impacts are clearly attributable to the project. The evaluator concludes to rate the capacities, coping mechanisms and resilience of the beneficiary communities as improved. Hence the set of measures has **successfully contributed to the overall objective to strengthen Palestinian civil society and its resilience in the face of disaster.**

Sustainability & Connectedness

The project plan provided for several factors that are well suited to strengthen sustainability and connectedness. **Most** of them were implemented accordingly, although **some opportunities were missed.**

Due to their membership composition, the DMCs are linked to local authorities and PRCS and thus well constituted to provide for future sustainability and connectedness of the CBDRR processes in each community. The main community volunteers for CBDRR in each community, the Volunteer Coaches (VCs), are also PRCS volunteers and thereby connected to PRCS beyond the project duration.

The project missed some opportunities to foster sustainability by not implementing certain activities that would have strengthened the transition of structures and capacities to the post-project period. No CBDRR plans were drafted and enacted. On the one hand they could have been a means to stress in a documented way, that the implementation of the micro-projects was not meant to be the end of the road of CBDRR, but a first step on the road of CBDRR towards community development and resilience.

On the other hand the drafting process could have been an opportunity for the DMCs to reflect and define their vision and mission for the project time and, even more important, for the time after the end of the project. No Contingency plans were developed. The drafting of contingency plans would have meant to condense all information and necessary coordination related to preparedness for response in a single document that serves as future reference for cooperation in emergencies.

No drills were conducted. The conduct of community drills towards the end of the project could have helped to jointly exercise as a community and to experience the level of community preparedness that was achieved by the project. Drills thereby could have directed the communities' attention to outputs of the project and thereby could have contributed to awareness raising. The same conclusion applies for the school context.

No exit meetings with the communities and schools were conducted to clarify and discuss post-project relations between PRCS and the communities. Such meetings could have contributed to transferring the relationship from project-mode to post-project mode by defining future modalities and options for cooperation. For instance, both parties could have discussed opportunities for future refresher-trainings or modalities for replenishment of response related consumables like FA kits.

Coherence

The evaluator rates the different policies of the actors involved as **coherent**. No breach of the 7 RCRC principles nor any unintended political consequences were reported as a consequence of the project.

Recommendations

Recommendations related to the project approach
VCAs: include climate change and urban risks by using IFRC manual add-on in VCAs & related trainings
Community committee formation: facilitate broad composition of community DRR committees – inclusion of most vulnerable – Tool: advocacy & community meetings
Strengthen institutionalization of community DRR committees: Strengthen ownership & sustainability of community DRR committees. Tool: village development plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision/Mission - Mandate - Strategy - Steps for implementation beyond project
Conduct drills IN communities & schools: Useful tool for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness raising - Practice for community - Problem analysis & monitoring of capacities
School based FA trainings: Consider to train permanent administrative staff, because teachers and students are changing regularly
If feasible, plan for resources for follow up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refresher trainings - Replenishment of FA kit materials
Conduct exit meetings in communities & schools & produce leaflet to be distributed in wider community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree on mode of future cooperation - Define contact points to PRCS - Clarify modalities of future refresher trainings FA - Clarify modalities of future replenishment of FA kit materials

Recommendations related to general project management
Consider Management for results approach to gain more knowledge for project steering and accountability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include monitoring activities (and results) in Project Log Frame - Plan for results based monitoring & budget for it - Measure change/level of achievement of results instead of measuring activities
Conduct baselines and endlines to measure changes & success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget for it and plan for activities in M&E in project Log Frame

Recommendations related to wider resilience programming
Capacity Building: ensure that for each sector addressed by the intervention, technical expertise is built among the PRCS volunteer squad in the communities
Community committee formation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure participation of skilled PRCS volunteers for each sector addressed by PRCS - Keep a door of the committees open to other organisations and service providers for sectors beyond PRCS own capacities and expertise