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Annual Programme Report 2022

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Annual Report 2022

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Yhteenveto ohjelmasta

Vuosi 2022 oli ensimmäinen toteutusvuosi Suomen Punaisen Ristin kehitysyhteistyöohjelman nelivuotisesta (2022–2025) ohjelmakaudesta. Se oli myös siirtymävuosi kahden ohjelmakauden välillä. Aiemmasta yhteisöterveyteen ja katastrofivalmiuteen tähtäävästä ohjelmakehikosta siirryttiin uuteen, neljään pääteemaan tähtäävään tuloskehikkoon. Ohjelman alla toteutettavat hankkeet ja maaohjelmat kohdentuvat yhteen tai useampaan näistä neljästä temaattisesta tavoitteesta: 1) ilmastoviisas katastrofiriskeihin varautuminen ja niiden vähentäminen, 2) naisten ja tyttöjen seksuaali- ja lisääntymisterveyden ja -oikeuksien edistäminen, 3) humanitaarisen avun ja kehitysyhteistyön välisen jatkumon vahvistaminen konfliktien ja kriisien keskellä sekä 4) vahvojen ja inklusiivisten paikallisten Punaisen Ristin ja Punaisen Puolikuun toimijoiden tukeminen.

Kehitysyhteistyöohjelma perustuu Suomen Punaisen Ristin uuden kansainvälisen avustustoiminnan linjauksen neljälle strategiselle suunnalle: vaikuttavuusorientoituneisuus, muutosturvallisuus, tasa-arvoisuus ja yhdenvertaisuus sekä avun paikallisuus. Nämä vaikuttivat niin ohjelman läpileikkaaviin tavoitteisiin kuin organisaatorakenteeseen. Suomen Punainen Risti uudisti vuonna 2022 erityisesti keskustoimiston organisaatorakenteen. Keskustoimistolla perustettiin uusia yksiköitä ja keskitettiin tehtäviä sekä hallinto- ja koordinaatiovastuita. Henkilöstömäärä keskustoimistolla ei lisääntynyt. Kenttähenkilöstön määrä sen sijaan kasvoi ja heille siirrettiin entistä enemmän vastuuta hankeseurannasta, taloushallinnosta ja erityisesti teknisestä tuesta. Tällä vastattiin asiantuntemuksen ja ohjelmien laadun kehittämisen tarpeisiin sekä lisättiin painotusta kentälle palkattuihin työntekijöihin kasvattaen kenttähenkilöstön monimuotoisuutta, paikallisuutta ja määrää.

Kehitysyhteistyöohjelman tuloskehikko ja sen tavoitearvot päivitettiin vuonna 2022. Vuoden aikana suljettiin ja arvioitiin päättyviä hankkeita sekä tehtiin alkukartoituksia ja käynnistettiin uusia hankkeita, jotka olivat linjassa tuloskehikon kanssa. Vuoden aikana käytiin läpi myös yli ohjelmakauden jatkuneita hankkeita mm. Sierra Leonessa ja Malawissa ja tarkennettiin niiden temaattisia painotuksia ja tavoitteita.

Läpileikkaavissa tavoitteissa keskityttiin erityisesti tasa-arvon ja vammaisinklusion edistämiseen sekä ilmastokestävytyteen. Vammaisinklusiosta aloitettiin institutionaalinen yhteistyö Abilis-säätiön kanssa ja panostettiin erityisesti oman ja kumppanien inklusio-osaamisen kehittämiseen hankesuunnittelussa. Ilmastokestävytyden osalta saatiin valmiiksi järjestön ilmastokestävytyden linjaus sekä panostettiin hankesuunnittelussa ilmastoriskien tunnistamiseen ja ilmastonmuutoksen parempaan huomioimiseen. Ilmatieteen laitoksen kanssa toteutettava yhteistyöhanke sääpalveluiden ja yhteisötason varhaisen varoituksen ja toiminnan mallien kehittämiseen alkoi Itä-Afrikassa.

Suomen Punaisen Ristin kehitysyhteistyöohjelma kohdistui hauraissa maissa eläviin ihmisiin ja yhteisöihin, jotka ovat alttiita niin ilmastonmuutoksen voimistamille katastrofeille ja pitkäkestoisille vaikutuksille kuin konflikteille. Afrikassa ohjelma kohdentui erityisesti Itä-Afrikkaan ja Sahelin alueelle. Aasiassa toimittiin pitkäaikaisten kumppanien kanssa ja Lähi-idässä tuki ohjattiin Jemeniin. Vuonna 2022 ohjelma kaikkiaan tavoitti 910 329 ihmistä 14 kohdemaassa. Näistä välittömistä hyödynsaajista 56 % oli naisia ja 44 % miehiä.

Vuonna 2022 Suomen Punaisen Ristin kansainvälisen avustustoiminnan kokonaisvolyyymi oli 54,1 miljoonaa euroa, josta kehitysyhteistyöhön käytettiin 13,6 miljoonaa euroa (25 %). Ulkoministeriön rahoittaman kehitysyhteistyöohjelman toteutuneet kulut olivat hieman alle 8,3 miljoonaa euroa. Ohjelman omarahoitussuus oli 26 %. Vaadittua suurempi omarahoitus mahdollisti liikkumavaran tilanteissa, joissa implementointi vaikeutui tai avun tarve kasvoi konfliktien, kriisien tai poliittisten muutosten myötä esimerkiksi Afganistanissa ja Etiopiassa.

Vuoden 2022 toimintaympäristöä leimasi Ukrainan konflikti, sen syventämät globaalit kriisit, kuten ruokaturvattomuus ja taloudelliset vaikeudet sekä myös paikalliset konfliktit ja ilmastonmuutoksen pahentamat kuivuusjaksot. Humanitaariset tarpeet kasvoivat lähes kaikkialla ja haastoivat kehitystavoitteiden saavuttamista. Suomen Punainen Risti pyrki kehitysyhteistyöllään vaikuttamaan kriisien juurisyihin yhteisöjen omia voimavaroja vahvistamalla. Ohjelmatuella myös tuettiin niitä kansallisia yhdistyksiä, jotka tarjoavat kriisi- ja perusterveydenhuollon palveluita pitkittyneiden konfliktien ja väkivallan vaivaamilla alueilla, joissa valtion palvelut ovat puutteelliset kuten Afganistanissa, Jemenissä ja Somaliassa. Punaisen Ristin kansainvälisen komitean (ICRC) kanssa toteutettava kriisiviestintään ja konfliktialueilla tapahtuvan viestinnän kehittämiseen tähtäävä Safer Access Framework (SAF) hanke jatkui henkilötuella Sahelissa ja Afrikan sarvessa tehtiin yhteistyötä Punaisten Ristien kanssa.

1. Programme progress in 2022

1.1 Strategic overview

Since its approval in November 2021, the Strategic Framework for Finnish Red Cross (FRC) International Aid¹ has been instrumental in guiding the FRC's work, encompassing humanitarian aid delivery, partnerships with local actors, programming, and organisational structure. The vision of being an impact-driven and adaptive international humanitarian partner, guided by principles of inclusion and localisation, underpins all programming efforts, including the Development Programme funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA).

The Development Programme for 2022–2025 implements a new Results Framework (annex 1), which is built around FRC's four identified focus areas, stemming from the organisation's strategic priorities. These focus areas are climate-smart disaster preparedness and risk reduction; improving the health of women and girls; reinforcing the interlinkages between humanitarian and development actions; and building strong and inclusive local actors.

The strategic shift has resulted in a more targeted programming approach, focusing on identified key competences that provide added value. As a result, the FRC has transitioned from the previously used broader community programming approaches. The new approach yields more targeted and impactful country-level projects, specifically addressing some of the most pressing development needs in the target countries, such as adaptation and preparedness to impacts of climate crisis with local capacities or improving the most vulnerable women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The Results Framework is more comprehensive than before, enabling the FRC to measure and aggregate key outputs at the programme level, such as the number of people benefiting from early warning systems or receiving inclusive sexual and reproductive health services, contributing to the Programme's outcomes. This approach also facilitates a clearer demonstration of how the FRC Development Programme contributes to the development policy objectives of the MFA of Finland, particularly in relation to climate and SRHR objectives.

In line with the new Strategic Framework, the FRC implemented an organisational change in 2022 with an aim to become more fit for purpose with impact-driven, adaptive, inclusive, and localised resourcing in right places. The new organisation also makes clear investments in building partnerships and institutional learning. At the FRC Headquarters, the management of the Development Programme was placed within the newly formed Support and Coordination unit responsible for coordinating long-term programming and humanitarian financing, as well as ensuring Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (PMEAL) capacities, quality control, and administrative processes. Another newly formed unit, the Knowledge Development and Advocacy unit took the responsibility for building FRC's expertise and added value in key thematic areas, as well as ensuring reaching key cross-cutting objectives from inclusion to climate resilience. This unit also started to develop and implement FRC's advocacy plans supporting the broader development objectives, including in climate, health, and localisation.

To effectively implement the Strategic Framework, the Development Programme's flagship projects, and to ensure sufficient technical capacity building to the implementing partners, the FRC engaged in three strategic partnerships in 2022. Partnerships were formed with Abilis Foundation for disability inclusion, the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) for Early Warning Early Action (EWEA), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for the Safer Access Framework (SAF).

In 2022, the FRC finalised and approved its Climate sustainability policy², which sets ambitions to increase sustainability in the organisation's own activities, to invest in climate change adaptation and preparedness, and to advocate for strong climate action with the public and key stakeholders. In 2022, the FRC was involved in an ICRC-led development of the Humanitarian Carbon Calculator. Utilising this tool, the FRC will start measuring the carbon

¹ <https://www.punainenristi.fi/globalassets/6.-tyomme--paasivu/kansainvalinen-apu/strategic-framework-for-finnish-red-cross-international-aid.pdf>

² <https://www.redcross.fi/our-work/ethical-and-responsible-red-cross/environmental-responsibility/>

footprint of its operations through pilots launched in 2023. Overall, the FRC strives to be a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030.

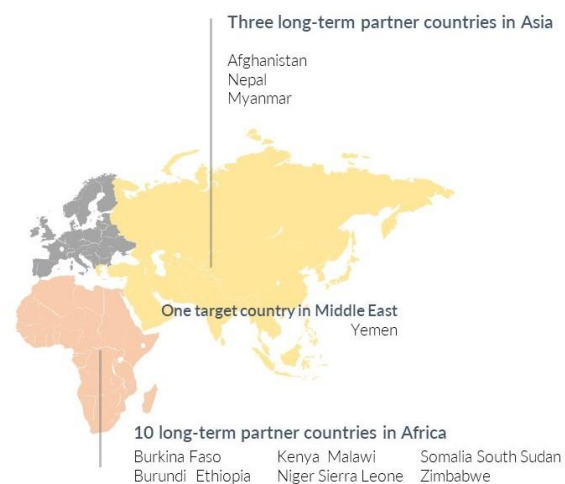
1.2 Implementation overview

Mounting humanitarian challenges leading to increased focus on partners' humanitarian capacities

The year 2022 was characterised by a huge increase in global humanitarian needs compounded by the conflict in Ukraine with its immediate impacts in Ukraine, a growing number of people on the move as well as its secondary impacts on, among others, global economics, inflation and supply chains, affecting the people with least safety networks available the most. The conflict directly impacted, for example, the availability of food imports to the Horn of Africa. Climate crisis was manifested by extended drought across Africa, creating a wide-spread hunger crisis on the continent. Local conflicts and volatile security situations increased needs and hampered humanitarian access in many countries in Africa, including, for example, FRC's partner countries Burkina Faso and Ethiopia. The protracted humanitarian and political crisis in Afghanistan and Myanmar deepened the needs and continued to impact long-term programming.

All the global compounded crises also made it more challenging for the development and humanitarian sector to raise funds to match the increased needs. Accessing sufficient funds to meet basic needs was especially challenging for the so-called forgotten crises. The FRC managed to raise a record amount of humanitarian funding in 2022, with a total worth of 40.5 million euros of humanitarian aid delivered. This included funding from FRC's own Disaster Relief Fund, the MFA and, for example, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). In addition to Ukraine, the FRC channelled significant humanitarian financing to Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa region, Syria and many other regions. In 2022, the FRC also entered into a Pilot Programmatic Partnership (PPP), led by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), with DG ECHO. The PPP aims to improve disaster preparedness, cash and voucher assistance capacities and, for example, epidemic preparedness in a total of 24 countries globally. In 2022 the FRC led the implementation of PPP in Cambodia, Eswatini and Somalia and, partnering with the German Red Cross, in Tajikistan.

The FRC's MFA-funded Development Programme continued to target some of the most fragile, least developed, and conflict and disaster-prone countries. The Development Programme was implemented in fourteen long-term partner countries, of which ten in Africa, one in the Middle East, and three in Asia. Of the fourteen long-term partner countries, twelve are among the 46 least developed countries, while ten are classified as countries at a very high risk according to the INFORM Risk Index.



The majority of the Development Programme expenditure, 65% of the direct costs, incurred in Africa, in line with the level of the previous Programme phase and the general targeting of development funds. Support to FRC's key, long-term partners in Asia constituted 23% of the expenditure, while Yemen's share was 2%. The flagship multi-country programmes accounted for 6%, Global Education, Advocacy and Development Communication for 3%, and programme support costs for 1% of the overall expenditure.

The dire humanitarian situation also had an impact on the MFA-funded Development Programme. In 2022, the FRC requested to repurpose development funds for humanitarian aid twice, in order to address the complex crises in Ethiopia at the beginning of the year, and the Africa hunger crisis with targeted funding for Somalia and South Sudan in the middle of the year. In general, the FRC Programme had to focus more than planned on its partners' humanitarian capacities, delivery of life-saving health services, and other humanitarian-development nexus activities for example in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Somalia, which resulted in delayed implementation of long-term

programming in the countries. However, many National Society partners, for example in Malawi, Niger and Sierra Leone, still managed to implement their long-term programmes as planned, or to successfully plan for new projects, as in Nepal, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.

Transition and new initiatives defining the programme implementation

As the year 2022 was the first implementation year of the four-year Development Programme 2022–2025, the implementation at country level was characterised by transition typical for moving from one funding period to another. A number of long-term projects with community health and disaster preparedness approaches under the broader resilience framework of the previous Programme phase were closed and evaluated in 2022. At the same time, the FRC country teams together with the National Red Cross Red Crescent Society partners were conducting e.g. climate-smart community assessments and finalising implementation plans in line with the new Programme Results Framework.

The new projects in 2022 included initiatives such as the Climate-Smart Resilience project in Zimbabwe and the Reducing Disaster Impact through Inclusive Preparedness and Anticipatory Action (REDI) project in Nepal. In Somalia, the FRC continued a broader health approach within a nexus setting, working alongside with the Somali Red Crescent Society. The projects in Sierra Leone and Malawi continued to prioritise and emphasise climate-smart disaster risk reduction and SRHR, aligning these previously initiated projects better with FRC's new thematic focus areas. The project in Malawi is set to end by the end of 2023, while the one in Sierra Leone will run until the end of 2024.

In addition to the country projects, the FRC launched three new multi-country projects within the framework of the Programme: Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) in collaboration with the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI), Safer Access Framework (SAF) partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the Financial Sustainability Development (FSD) project implemented directly with the targeted National Societies. These flagship projects aimed to advance some of the key thematic focus areas through pilot approaches and extend their impact beyond the fourteen long-term partners. The partners involved in these flagship projects were the Rwandan Red Cross and Tanzania Red Cross National Society for EWEA, the Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society for the FSD project, and West Africa more broadly for the SAF support to the ICRC in the region. While all the multi-country projects in 2022 were implemented in Africa, the aim is to eventually expand multi-country projects into global programmes, enabling learnings gained from the pilots to be shared with additional countries, including in Asia.

The FRC started one new partnership process in 2022 with the Burkina Red Cross Society, in line with the strategic approach to increase focus on the Sahel region. With the addition of Burkina Faso and the health nexus project in Yemen, the number of programme countries rose to fourteen from the previous twelve. In the long term, the FRC aims to exit from some of the countries to streamline the focus on countries most susceptible to e.g. the climate crisis, with fragility as well as vulnerabilities and gaps in funding and external partners. The decision to exit from Malawi at the end of the project (end of 2023) was taken in 2022. The project in Malawi is well funded by other partners and no longer at the core of FRC's Strategic Framework. Releasing resources from Malawi will eventually help allocating them to countries with increased needs and new programming ambitions.

In 2022, the Finnish Red Cross Development Programme reached a total of 910,329 individuals, of whom 56% women and 44% men, through 18 projects reporting direct beneficiaries. This was mainly attributable to the projects coming to an end. Annex 2 includes a full summary of the key results and aggregated output indicators in 2022.

2. Programme achievements per thematic focus areas

The start of the new Programme phase in 2022 marked the initiation of thematic focus area-based programming. Four focus areas, in alignment with the FRC's Strategic Framework for International Aid and contributing to the development priorities of the MFA, guide the country-level planning. Each country-level project is contributing to one or two of these focus areas, ensuring a targeted and strategic approach to address key development challenges. Annex 3 contains the annual country reports for 2022, which offer an analysis of the progress of implementation at the country level and insights into the achievements, challenges, and outcomes of the activities in each Programme target country. The following chapters reflect achievements and challenges per each focus area.

2.1 Focus area 1: Climate-smart disaster preparedness and risk reduction

Mainstreaming climate resilience into planning

In 2022, the adoption of the climate-smart programming approach started to show through the incorporation of climate risks into project planning. Understanding of the increased frequency and intensity of hazards, the changing patterns of exposure and vulnerabilities, as well as the likely impacts of climate change on target communities and for different sectors was enhanced. Projects increasingly utilised combined knowledge and information from various experts and sources. This included tapping into local knowledge, cross-sectoral expertise, and climate information. By integrating this combined knowledge, the projects were able to make locally applicable and sustainable choices for adaptation. Several projects bridged science, governmental authorities, and local communities, created synergies, and added value beyond the project scope. Several new climate-smart projects were planned in 2022 aiming at increasing both community and institutional climate resilience.

The IFRC's enhanced vulnerability and capacity assessment (EVCA) tool was used in four programme countries: Burundi, Myanmar, Nepal, and Zimbabwe. This participatory tool was highly beneficial in empowering communities to identify their coping capacities and plan locally-led actions to reduce risks. The activities in Kenya and Sierra Leone were based on previously conducted EVCAs. The planning of the new health programme in Afghanistan was informed by research on the impacts of climate change on health commissioned by the FRC during the previous Programme phase. EVCA and climate-smart feasibility studies were also used in projects funded by other donors, such as DG ECHO-funded actions in Somalia and Eswatini. In addition, a specific climate assessment was conducted to study climate trends and projections in the project region in Nepal. The FRC supported the development of the Heat Action Plan for Nepalgunj in Nepal.

During the planning of new projects, some activities were screened vis-à-vis climate change implications, weather extremes and changing seasons, and options were identified for how to adjust the activities to be climate smart. However, this screening and adjustment process was not yet systematically conducted across the Development Programme and more concerted efforts need to be taken to ensure that the activities are aligned with climate-smart principles.

Minimising impact from climate and weather-related disasters

Disaster risk reduction, preparedness, anticipatory action and response capacities and early warning systems were at the core of the actions to address weather-related disasters and to adapt to erratic seasons. Local level structures were established, such as community disaster risk reduction committees or groups and early warning teams. By-laws for disaster prevention and environmental protection were put in place, and relevant trainings were provided, focusing on preparedness, response, and early warning early action. Upstream and downstream river communities were also linked as part of efforts to develop a local early warning system. Capacities for anticipatory and early action were built in Nepal, Myanmar, and Zimbabwe. Hazard monitoring was enhanced in Malawi and Nepal through rainfall and river gauge monitoring by the Early Warning Teams along with the dissemination of seasonal forecasts and advisories.

Various plans were developed, reviewed, and updated to enhance preparedness, including contingency plans, preparedness plans, hazard action plans, disaster risk reduction plans, heat action plans, and early warning early action plans. These initiatives were undertaken in Kenya, Malawi, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sierra Leone. Simulations were organised to test the response mechanisms in Sierra Leone and Nepal. In Nepal, the FRC contributed to the development and planning of the implementation of the Local Adaptation Plan of Action, a governmental tool for climate resilience.

Changing water availability was addressed in water, sanitation and hygiene projects to enhance water resource management, raise awareness, and adapt to climate change. Water points or boreholes were constructed in Burundi, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan, facilitating access to safe water sources. Additionally, recharge ponds were rehabilitated in Nepal, and water pipes were repaired in Myanmar. The establishment and training of water point user committees played a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of these projects, promoting community engagement and ownership in water resource management.

To adapt to climate change, nature-based solutions were promoted with a focus on tree planting and establishment of tree nurseries in Kenya, Myanmar, and Burundi. In Sierra Leone, the FRC managed a tree planting project funded by the Icelandic Red Cross, contributing to the Pan-African initiative on tree planting.

Climate-smart agriculture as part of community programming increased agricultural productivity and incomes of target groups, aiming to decrease the impact of climate change. Climate-smart agriculture was promoted with farmers, Ministries, and local authorities in Kenya. To ensure long-term adoption of climate-smart practices, champions were identified and trained within the communities, empowering them to advocate for the climate-smart agriculture practices at the local level. Integrated pest management measures were implemented in Kenya, Nepal, and South Sudan to decrease pest infestation and the emergence of new pests and diseases in both crops and livestock linked to changing temperatures and seasons, such as higher temperatures, more wet days, and longer droughts. Kitchen gardens were established in Burundi and local seeds and tools for micro-mitigation were distributed in South Sudan. Trainings on climate-smart agriculture included measures to avoid and reduce negative environmental impacts, including minimum tillage and use of fertilizers.

Environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation were further advanced through additional measures. In Burundi, the promotion of waste recycling was achieved through the implementation of ECOSAN latrines, while clean-up campaigns in South Sudan and Myanmar focused on enhancing environmental hygiene. In Nepal, the use of solar panels was promoted to contribute to the adoption of renewable energy sources.

Strengthening capacities to anticipate and respond to disasters

The strengthening of disaster preparedness and capacities to act in anticipation of hazards was a priority across climate-smart programming. Understanding and addressing institutional preparedness gaps is fundamental to be able to implement early action. Some of the projects only initiated in 2022 already had an impact on the preparedness capacities of the partner Red Cross Red Crescent societies. Collaboration with relevant stakeholders, particularly hydrometeorological agencies, was further reinforced at all levels.

Early Action Protocols (EAP) were developed and tested for anticipatory action for drought in Zimbabwe. The forecast models were developed, and early actions prioritised with the communities. The highly consultative approach with active engagement of community members proved its added value in terms of ensuring inclusion of all community members and led to more relevant actions in the EAP. EAP is the formal tool for a National Red Cross Red Crescent Society to access the IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) anticipatory action pillar. This allows the National Society to access institutional, pre-identified funding for local actions. The FRC is also a member in the Forecast-based Action (FbA) by the DREF Validation Committee along with more than ten other Red Cross National Societies. This body is responsible for reviewing and validating the EAPs to be funded by the DREF anticipatory pillar. During 2022, four of the fourteen EAPs submitted were validated by the FRC, including drought in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, and Volcanic Ash in Costa Rica and Ecuador. During 2022, the FRC also supported the engagement of the Myanmar Red Cross in the Validation Committee.

The FRC played a role nationally in Zimbabwe by promoting the establishment of Forecast-based Action Community of Practice as the key reference point for FbA and contributed actively to the anticipatory action coordination platform. The FRC represented the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in the Community of Practice in Nepal. In Nepal, the FRC also contributed to the first ever cold wave advisory by providing data. The development of EAP for drought-induced crop failure and food security also supported anticipatory action to cyclone impacts in Zimbabwe and the National Society's abilities to expand.

Collaboration between the national hydro-meteorological agency and the National Society in Sierra Leone was enhanced through a feasibility study linking meteorological capacity assessment with hazard mapping and Sierra Leone Red Cross Society's capacity for early action. The assessment was conducted in cooperation with the Finnish Meteorological Institute, and while it enhanced connections and understanding, the assessment eventually led to deciding not to pursue a Forecast-based Action project in Sierra Leone. In Nepal, various interactions paved the way for increased future collaboration. The capacities of the Department for Hydrometeorology (DHM) were built and the DHM was supported by convening local actors to raise awareness of their services/products.

The IFRC launched several new tools and guidance documents over the year, which were introduced in webinars and as a part of global working groups, such as operational frameworks for heat action and anticipatory action, a nature navigator handbook for disaster risk management practitioners and an environmental quick guide, and new trainings on EVCA training of trainers, and a road map to community resilience. These were shared within the FRC, and, in addition, a study session was organised on effective preparedness for disasters, making National Societies stronger through National Society Development (NSD) using Preparedness for Effective Response (PER). The FRC facilitated a PER assessment in Myanmar and trained the National Society on EVCA. Preparedness capacities were built, and trainings organised on first aid, light search and rescue, EVCA, Stay Safe, and climate change mitigation at the branch level in Myanmar and Nepal, on hazard monitoring and forecasting in Zimbabwe, and on cholera preparedness in Malawi. The FRC also contributed to the development of an IFRC guide for climate-smart programming and operations, to be available in 2023.

Initiating the multi-country Early Warning Early Action project

The FRC initiated a multi-country Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) project with an inception phase in Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania in synergy with the FMI's FINKERAT project. It enhanced collaboration between the FRC and the FMI, both at the HQs and regionally, and facilitated collaboration among the three National Societies and their respective HydroMet agencies. National hydrometeorological risk contexts, including historical impacts of meteorological hazards were jointly analysed by HydroMet agencies, National Societies, the FMI and the FRC. Based on the analysis, the target areas were identified focusing on high vulnerability to rapid-onset meteorological hazards, mainly flash floods and landslides. Hazard perception studies were commissioned at the end of 2022 to understand the community perception at target locations about hazards, mitigation measures taken in the communities, access to alert information and the role of indigenous knowledge, and awareness of existing early warning systems and perceptions of their effectiveness.

Enhancing the EWEA value chain to ensure warnings lead to localised life-saving action is a key objective of FRC's people-centred and inclusive approach. This is at the core of the EWEA multi-country project's advocacy efforts towards national Hydrometeorological agencies and was also prominent in the planning of a new EWEA project in Nepal. A regional technical adviser was deployed to Nairobi by the FRC to assist in the project. The adviser is closely working with a peer deployed in Asia, and both contribute to the FRC thematic working group on climate-smart disaster preparedness and collaborate closely with the National Societies in their regions.



2.2 Focus area 2: Health of women and girls

Enhancing the programming for impactful sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) approach

The FRC works with partner Red Cross Red Crescent Societies to improve the health of women, girls and children through long-term community-based health programming. The focus under the new Development Programme is on realising sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of women and girls and addressing the major causes of child mortality. Throughout the year, extensive planning efforts were undertaken at country levels, with FRC staff

providing guidance and technical support to National Societies throughout the process. These planning processes utilised existing Red Cross Red Crescent participatory assessment methods and stakeholder engagement, and applied the new approaches and tools developed by the FRC in partnership with National Societies. By combining evidence-based practices with contextualised approaches, these planning processes facilitated the development of robust and impactful strategies for SRHR programming.

Women and girls of all abilities were assisted to access quality non-discriminatory sexual and reproductive health services through focused programmes that increased the demand for these services and established community-level linkages between women, girls and adolescents with SRH services. For example in Malawi, the project witnessed an increase in health facility deliveries, a decrease in HIV treatment defaulter rates, and an improved uptake of family planning methods. In Afghanistan, the FRC has been a strong advocate for the full inclusion of women and girls in IFRC's programmes with the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS). Through a joint planning process involving the ARCS, the IFRC and the FRC, the programme in Afghanistan has been revised to place a stronger focus on the health needs of women and girls.

By adopting a rights-based approach, the FRC has made efforts to prioritise the hardest-to-reach communities and marginalised groups for its Programme interventions. For example in Nepal, the focus has been on reaching out to the widely excluded Dalit caste group. In Kenya, pastoralist communities have been targeted, while in Ethiopia, project activities have prioritised those with least access to and control over water resources. To foster local ownership and value local knowledge and expertise, the FRC utilised context-appropriate approaches in different settings. For instance in Zimbabwe, an SRHR-focused analysis of enhanced vulnerability and capacity assessments has led to targeting of at-risk population groups, such as fishing communities, with relevant SRHR information. This shift has transformed at-risk communities from being recipients of activities to becoming active partners in problem-solving processes.

The FRC Programme is dedicated to reaching young people with comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). However, delivering CSE with standardised and high-quality curricula remains a challenge in many developing country settings due to cultural, religious, and restrictive social norms. To address this, in 2022, a review of the quality elements and gaps in CSE, often known as 'life skills' programmes, was initiated in the Africa region. In countries where life skills programming was implemented, existing curricula were collected and reviewed to gain better understanding of the national CSE landscapes and identify areas for improvement in 2023.

Each country faced unique challenges specific to its context. For example in Zimbabwe, significant work has been done on HIV prevention by the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society, government, and other stakeholders, resulting in a more advanced curriculum that has been contextualised for use within project plans. On the other hand, in Ethiopia, life skills trainings often lack valuable information, exclude boys, and fail to foster two-way communication with the learners. The investigation of social and gender norms in these different country settings revealed not only a larger need for curricula and better understanding of the national context but also for engaging in dialogues with parents and religious leaders to advocate for the value of CSE. These insights have been incorporated into the plan for 2023.

The FRC has continued collaboration with relevant partner organisations, both local and international. Technical meetings with UNICEF brought tested ideas for improvement into programme design, and UNESCO tools and standards were utilised. Coordination and collaboration with UNFPA have been ongoing in Myanmar and at country level in Africa, while cooperation with UNICEF has focused on school water, sanitation and hygiene in Afghanistan.

Advocating for the fundamental rights of women and girls to live lives free of violence and abuse

During the previous Programme phase, the FRC started developing tailored, participatory planning approaches to examine harmful social norms in child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), gender-based violence (GBV), female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), and menstrual hygiene management (MHM). This involved the creation of 'vignettes', context-specific tools that deepen community discussions and investigate normative behaviours and attitudes within focus groups discussions. In 2022, these were applied to address such topics in Kenya, South Sudan, and Burundi. Social norms trainings were conducted to enhance the capacity of each National Society in collecting and analysing the gathered information. Insights and lessons learnt from the use of these tools were then applied to build improved activity plans and targeted actions, ensuring that the right audiences were reached with the right messages at the right times.

The issue of harmful social norms was addressed across almost all FRC-supported programmes. While the processes of abandoning harmful practices take time, activities are progressively implemented. For instance in Malawi, football tournaments were organised to raise awareness among youths about the consequences of early marriages and teen pregnancies. In Niger, community theatre plays were employed to tackle gender-based violence, and in South Sudan, the project supported an inter-school debate on early marriage.

In December 2022, the FRC participated in the Social and Behavioural Change Communication Summit in Morocco, where fruitful discussions were held with UNICEF, UNFPA, and other key stakeholders to share ideas and experiences, including new methods to improve demand creation for health services, reduce child marriages and eliminate FGM/C.

Addressing child mortality and morbidity through community-based approaches

To support children's right to health, the FRC continued its efforts to address the major causes of child mortality and morbidity through participatory community approaches and evidence-based strategies. One of these approaches is the Community-based Health and First Aid (CBHFA) approach, which includes modules on behaviour change, maternal, neonatal and child health, nutrition, and communicable diseases. This approach has been implemented in various countries, including Burundi, Malawi, and Myanmar, for several years.

In Burundi, an external evaluation of the project conducted in 2022 yielded encouraging results, highlighting improvements in child health. Sensitisation efforts during volunteers' household visits led to increased immunisation coverage, while caregivers were equipped with knowledge on proper infant and young child feeding practices. Additionally, the establishment of kitchen gardens contributed to a decrease in child malnutrition.

In Ethiopia and Somalia, health workers were trained in 2022 on Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI), Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) and Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (BeMONC), among others. These are key approaches in reducing maternal, newborn and child mortality. In Ethiopia, the trained health extension workers provided door-to-door services to enhance community access to basic healthcare. In Somalia, the Red Crescent-run clinics offered comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services,

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND REDUCING HARMFUL PRACTICES AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

In **South Sudan**, radio talk shows were conducted, covering various aspects of SGBV and allowing for live question and answer sessions. Additionally, community awareness sessions involved not only trained SSRC volunteers but also community leaders, religious leaders, and local police. This inclusive approach proved more effective than relying solely on volunteers for awareness sessions.

In **Kenya**, working with male champions also enabled the Kenya Red Cross Society to reach more men with information on the forms and effects of GBV and the importance of SRH. However, for similar projects in the future, it is essential to enhance this strategy by recruiting a higher number of male champions to help reach a critical mass of men in the community.

In **Malawi**, referral pathways to address protection and SGBV were mapped out to improve protection mechanisms. However, further analysis is required to establish a better functioning referral system. Currently, the sole organisation offering services for SGBV survivors is in the capital city of Zinder, which poses accessibility challenges for most of the beneficiaries.

including family planning, antenatal and postnatal care, safe delivery services, and voluntary counselling and testing. Mobile outreach clinics were also deployed to serve hard-to-reach communities in Afghanistan, Malawi, Niger, and Somalia. For instance in Malawi, where cyclones and floods caused disruptions to health services due to damaged infrastructure, these outreach clinics played a critical role in providing essential services such as child growth monitoring, nutrition screening, and vaccinations in hard-to-reach areas.

The FRC also participated in discussions with the IFRC, African National Societies, and partner National Societies operating in Africa to improve coordination between community health workers/systems and community-based volunteers. This included participation in the review of the South Sudan government's Boma Health Initiative to better define the role that Red Cross volunteers play in delivering basic child health services. In Malawi, similar efforts were undertaken to define the roles of health volunteers within communities and village health committees. Additionally, collaborative initiatives involving health workers, community leaders, educators, and law enforcement officers were implemented to protect girls from early marriage and FGM/C. Each country operates within a unique community health system with varying degrees of coverage and quality. Increased understanding of the gaps and opportunities enabled National Societies to position themselves as integral actors within the broader health system, rather than conducting parallel activities. The efforts to enhance coordination and collaboration will continue throughout 2023.

Improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene as a foundation for health

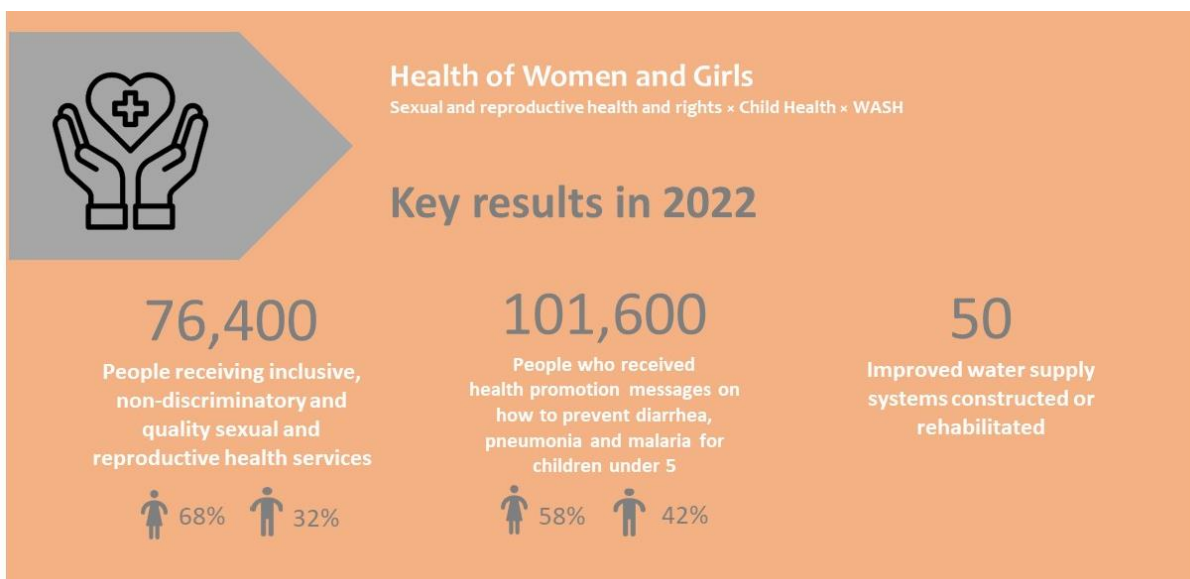
In 2022, the FRC supported the implementation of a wide range of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities that contributed to sustainable community capacities for water and sanitation management and hygiene promotion with behavioural change, improved child health, and the health of women and girls. For instance in Sierra Leone, improved access to safe water significantly reduced the burden on women, eliminating the need for them to travel long distances to fetch water and ensuring their safety. In challenging environments like Somalia, water, latrines, and hygiene promotion have served as excellent entry points to engage with communities. In Myanmar, the tangible impact of WASH interventions increased community acceptance of the Red Cross as communities readily see the value of these initiatives. Field visits conducted by the FRC and the IFRC have revealed that communities experienced increased wellbeing due to access to clean drinking water. Girls have reported better menstrual hygiene, increased study time, and overall happiness.

In all locations where access to safe and drinkable water is provided, the FRC ensures the training of water management committees or community groups responsible for managing and maintaining the water sources. In Sierra Leone, special attention was given in 2022 to ensuring the committees' financial sustainability through community contributions and microcredit schemes. Additionally, artisans, including women, were trained in the maintenance and repair of water pumps. The mid-term review conducted in 2022 reported that this community ownership and capacity building approach was viewed as one of the most successful health interventions within the integrated project. Village chiefs and community leaders reported a reduction in childhood diarrhoea because of these efforts.

The support for menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) primarily focuses on adolescents. Within the Red Cross context, menstrual hygiene management encompasses various enabling factors related to WASH, such as water supply, sanitation facilities including latrines, menstrual hygiene management kits, and hygiene items. However, the FRC embraces a broader understanding of menstrual health and hygiene, recognising its connection to health, well-being, gender, education, equity, and rights.

In several projects supported by the FRC, reusable menstrual pads are provided. A feasibility study on their use was conducted in Malawi in 2022. The feedback from communities has been positive, although challenges were reported by adolescents regarding appropriate washing and drying facilities. MHH-friendly and accessible latrines are part of the programme in many of the countries.

During FRC's monitoring mission to a target school of the previous FRC-supported programme in Kabul, female teachers highlighted the positive impact of improved WASH facilities on school attendance. This feedback aligns with similar reports from Ethiopia and South Sudan, where improved school attendance and even enhanced academic performance have been observed.



2.3 Focus area 3: Reinforcing the interlinkages between humanitarian and development action

Enhancing safe access and delivery of aid in situations of chronic violence

The FRC's humanitarian–development nexus approach under the Development Programme aims at supporting local Red Cross Red Crescent societies in their efforts to carry out development activities and deliver humanitarian aid in situations of chronic violence or conflict. In 2022, the FRC supported its partners in reaching out to populations hardest to access and people living in countries of protracted crisis with the Safer Access Framework (SAF) approach in partnership with the ICRC.

SAF is a set of interlinked elements designed to increase the acceptance of National Societies among different stakeholders, their security and access to communities in vulnerable positions. This is done via strategic and consistent communication to maintain their image as neutral, impartial, and independent humanitarian actors. FRC's approach involved assisting local Red Cross Red Crescent societies to earn trust and gain acceptance among affected communities, as well as among those who control or influence access to these communities via specific communication support.

In practice, for the first half of the year, the FRC deployed a communications adviser to the ICRC Abidjan delegation, who supported National Societies in West Africa and the Sahel region to develop their strategic approach to SAF via operational communication support (assessments, trainings, etc.). The support covered, for example, Niger and Burkina Faso and included safer access and crisis communication trainings.

For the second half of the year, the FRC deployed a communications adviser to the ICRC delegation in Addis Ababa to support National Societies in the East Africa region. The FRC communications adviser provided technical assistance especially on operational and crisis communication, and social media management. Activities in Ethiopia included dissemination of safe access and mass sensitisation of community groups and various authorities, as well as staff training across six regions. These initiatives were seen as crucial for ensuring the acceptance and access for humanitarian assistance to affected communities in the volatile security situation. The involvement of diverse stakeholders, including the military, local authorities, community groups, volunteers, and staff, was a key success factor. In South Sudan, both a Communication Policy and a Communication Strategy were drafted for the South Sudan Red Cross.

Progress in some of the Programme countries was slower than expected. In Burkina Faso, a SAF workshop was not held, as the whole start of the partnership was delayed. The planning for Afghanistan and Myanmar had to be postponed to 2023 due to contextual challenges. In Burundi, disruptions occurred due to capacity constraints and the need to prioritise other pressing issues. This situation presents a genuine dilemma: How to ensure the implementation of crucial activities in these complex and challenging contexts when the lack of capacity is partly due to the high humanitarian needs in these areas? The FRC emphasises the importance of the National Society taking ownership and leading this work as it involves the trust and recognition of its staff and its volunteers.

Increasing capacity to provide essential health services in areas affected by chronic violence

Another key element in the FRC Programme regarding nexus is to pilot and test health volunteering modalities to secure the provision of essential health services in areas affected by chronic violence. The aim is to especially support services that positively benefit girls and women, including those with disabilities. In 2022, the FRC and the Burkina Faso Red Cross co-created an SRHR framework programme for both peaceful and conflict-affected areas, allowing for the necessary flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. A needs assessment was conducted, and the recruitment of an FRC technical delegate began during the reporting period. While the actual implementation is yet to take off, an important lesson has already been learned: prioritising the leadership of the National Society is vital as they are best placed to make informed decisions regarding necessary adaptations.

The need to be able to work in the humanitarian and development nexus was also highly relevant for FRC programmes in conflict and violence-affected countries, such as Ethiopia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen, South Sudan and Myanmar. Significant disruptions took place and access constraints were experienced, necessitating programmatic and budgetary adjustments in programmes under the Development Programme. In Myanmar, the conflict and political situation, coupled with the international community's response, led to administrative hurdles and delays in the programme administrative processes, resulting in repeated revisions to budgets.

On the other hand, the events in Myanmar, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Yemen in 2022, which generated immense humanitarian needs, emphasise the critical role of working through National Societies deeply rooted in the affected societies. The presence and access of the National Society, its branches, and volunteers have been key in delivering humanitarian assistance. In Somalia, for instance, foreign staff was denied access to certain areas in Puntland, but the local Red Crescent Society remained operational. Similarly, in Afghanistan, the Afghan Red Crescent operates in all provinces, enabling the continuation of activities, particularly in the health sector.



2.4 Focus area 4: Building strong and inclusive local actors

Embedding capacity building of local partners to all programming

A key driver of the FRC Development Programme is to strengthen its local partner National Societies. The aim is to support partners in their efforts to become self-sustainable organisations that consistently deliver, through volunteers and staff, relevant countrywide services to vulnerable people for as long as is needed. In practice, all community-based programmes supported by the FRC incorporate capacity building components.

In 2022, the FRC re-defined its approach to National Society Development (NSD) aligned with the Strategic Framework. Support modalities were clarified, ensuring that the FRC continues to offer tailored assistance to partners for the development and implementation of their NSD plans. Furthermore, the FRC emphasises capacity-building for staff and volunteers through programmes with strong focus on strengthening local branch structures in FRC-supported programme regions.

In 2022, many FRC partners were in the process of renewing their multi-year NSD plans. For instance in Ethiopia, the ERCS-led NSD steering committee prepared an NSD roadmap for 2022–2025, along with a yearly NSD Plan of Action to be launched from 2023 onwards. However, in some cases, external or internal challenges slowed down the institutional NSD processes. These challenges varied from particularly difficult humanitarian contexts (e.g. Myanmar and Somalia) to organisational issues such as leadership change in the Nepal Red Cross Society. In Zimbabwe, the local Red Cross Society initiated its recovery from an organisational crisis that occurred between 2020 and 2021. With facilitation by the IFRC, the National Society conducted an organisational health-check in 2022, which aimed to inform the revised NSD plan to be implemented in 2023.

Even in cases in which a partner did not yet have an overall NSD plan in place, the FRC usually provided support for capacity building activities at the branch level. Common challenges addressed in branch development included enhancing technical project management capacities (e.g. improving financial reporting) and ensuring branch sustainability (e.g. strengthening volunteer management, retention, and establishing financial sustainability and exit planning with clear milestones). Coordination and thematic focusing, based on assessments of branch needs and capacities, are essential in order for the work to succeed.

Fostering volunteer engagement and sustainability at branch level

In branch development, the FRC continued to support volunteer management system development and youth volunteer activities (regional youth meeting and youth general assembly) in Malawi. In Kenya, support was provided for volunteer engagement and branch sustainability activities based on branch development plans of five branches in the FRC-supported programme area. In Burundi, support was given to the development of branch business plans and income generating activities in FRC-supported branches. In South Sudan, the FRC supported the Rumbek Branch in conducting a Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment and the subsequent Branch Development Plan focusing on enhancing emergency response capacity, cooperation with local authorities and branch sustainability planning.

In Zimbabwe, the focus was on branch exit and sustainability planning as the FRC-supported programme came to an end in Muzarabani region. In Myanmar, numerous training sessions were conducted for staff and volunteers in the FRC-supported projects, especially in Mandalay and Sagaing branches. These branches are at the epicentre of complex crises, and the trainings not only boosted operational capacity but also increased the visibility and outreach of the Myanmar Red Cross Society. This, in turn, helped the National Society to recruit and retain new volunteers.

Due to governance transition in Nepal, the institutional-level NSD interventions were limited. However, the project supported the building of the service delivery capacities of the five target branches to deliver Red Cross services in first aid and disaster response. In addition, financial software installation and training were provided at some of the branches to enhance their financial management capabilities.

Strengthening financial sustainability through collaborative assessments and development plans

Becoming more financially sustainable is an enabling factor for National Societies to be better able to effectively respond to humanitarian needs in accordance with the Fundamental Principle of independence. While the ability to attract and manage resources is a key element for financial sustainability, it goes together with an effective positioning based on the core mandate of the NS. In addition, sustainable business models and structures are essential components of financial sustainability. Strengthening the financial sustainability of National Societies requires work across multiple dimensions and is a long-term and complex process that must be tailored to local needs.

In 2022, the FRC hired a part-time financial sustainability delegate to provide technical advice and support to selected bilateral partners. The FRC focused its support on strengthening the financial sustainability of three long-term partners: the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, Burundi Red Cross, and Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society (BERCS). As part of this effort, collaborative sustainability assessment workshops were conducted at the end of 2021 in Eswatini and Sierra Leone, involving the National Societies, the FRC, the IFRC, and the British Red Cross. The workshop outcomes, together with the supporting NS documentation analysis in the first quarter of 2022, formed the basis for Financial Sustainability assessment reports, which the FRC Financial Sustainability delegate reviewed together with the National Society Senior Management teams in the spring of 2022. These reports provided valuable insights and recommendations, which were included in the National Society Development plans of the respective

partners. Additionally, the FRC proposed conducting a baseline study for the Burundi Red Cross but the proposal was not well received as the NS had recently undergone a detailed analysis of their financial management capacities with the support of the Norwegian Red Cross.

BERCS's NSD 2022 plan was a part of a longer-term NSD programme, which is based on their Strategic Plan 2021–2025. Many other capacity development measures were implemented to support financial sustainability, such as finance trainings for both finance and non-finance staff as well as the leadership. These capacity building measures were made possible through the support of FRC's own funds and the partnering British Red Cross.

In the spring, a mini workshop was organised with the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society (ZRCS) to introduce the concept of financial sustainability. Discussions regarding support in this area continued in late 2022, and the ZRCS expressed preliminary interest in cooperating on Financial Sustainability development.

Sierra Leone Red Cross Society	Burundi Red Cross	Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified the need for sound and transparent financial management practices, including timely completion of financial statements and audits, and effective management of the domestic unrestricted income sources • Experienced operational challenges and lack of qualified personnel in the finance department • Agreed to evaluate SLRCS-owned land and buildings to assess assets and income-generating potential • Process was prolonged and activities could only commence in 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised the need for support in developing financial management competencies and processes • Recruited a consultant trainer to improve financial management education • Trained 15 accountants from Headquarters and 33 participants from three regions. Focal point was appointed in each region to provide support to their colleagues. • Established an internal audit function to strengthen internal control mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified increasing and diversifying unrestricted income streams as a key area of focus • Organised trainings to branch committees and staff members to enhance capacity in planning, implementing, and managing social enterprises • Recruited a resource mobilisation officer to strengthen resource mobilisation efforts • Reviewed and updated existing policies • Monitoring and support mission conducted by FRC Financial Sustainability delegate • Formed a working group to create a core cost policy

Globally, the FRC played an active role in the IFRC-led Financial Sustainability Community of Practice and collaborated on the final development and launch of the digital platform for the Financial Development Competency Network (FDCN) in June 2022. The FDCN is a platform that brings together over 700 RCRC practitioners from more than 100 National Societies to work and learn together around the topic of financial management.

Collaborating with Abilis to strengthen disability inclusion

Abilis Consulting (Abilis) was selected through a competitive bidding process to provide technical support for disability inclusion in the FRC Development Programme 2022–2025. The support aims at more comprehensive and systematic disability inclusion in project planning and implementation at country level, while also developing the skills and capacities of the FRC staff to comprehensively address disability inclusion. As a result, disability inclusion is further strengthened at both programmatic as well as organisational and strategic levels. Abilis provides the support together with its project country partners that are local organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) as well as with CBM Global Disability Inclusion partnership. An essential goal of this partnership is to establish sustainable, long-term linkages and cooperation between Red Cross Red Crescent societies and the local organisations of persons with disabilities. The collaboration with Abilis commenced in 2022 with an inception phase, which involved drafting of a more detailed strategy for the duration of the cooperation (2022–2025) and a comprehensive plan for 2022.

To enhance capacity building, three training modules were developed for the use of partner National Societies on disability inclusion. These modules targeted leadership, project staff, and volunteers. The training modules were tested in Zimbabwe where a four-day disability-inclusion training workshop was organised in collaboration with Abilis, CBM Global, and the Zimbabwe Red Cross in December 2022. The objectives of this workshop were to foster a basic understanding among Zimbabwe Red Cross Society staff and FRC delegates on applying a rights-based

approach to disability within the FRC programme, to identify practical steps to strengthen disability inclusion in project plans and determine priority areas requiring technical advisory support for disability inclusion. The workshop also provided a platform for leaders of local organisations of persons with disabilities to share their personal experiences on disability with the participants. As a result of the training, a detailed inclusion plan was developed with the project team in Zimbabwe to ensure that disability inclusion is integrated into all project components.

The project team, as well as the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society more broadly, greatly benefitted from the knowledge gained during the training, and the training motivated them and ensured very strong management team buy-in. During and after the training, the participants were asked to rate themselves on two aspects: their level of disability knowledge and level of confidence to include persons with disabilities in their work. The ratings were measured on a scale of 1 to 10. The findings revealed that prior to the training, the participants had a low average disability knowledge score of 4. However, after the training, the score doubled to 8. A similar positive trend was observed in the participants' confidence levels to include persons with disabilities in their daily work. Initially, the average confidence score was 3, but after the training it significantly improved to 9. These results demonstrate the positive impact of the training on the participants' knowledge and confidence regarding disability inclusion.

Staff from Kenya, Malawi, and Eswatini Red Cross Societies took part in the training in Zimbabwe, ensuring that the benefits and knowledge could be shared across countries. Consequently, there was a strong motivation among the participants to promote disability inclusion strongly in their own work and their respective National Societies. For example, Kenya is now planning to place a stronger and more systematic focus on disability inclusion at the institutional level, with support from the FRC in 2023.

Abilis supported the planning and implementation of four disability inclusion training sessions for both FRC HQ and programme staff, which took place from September to December 2022. These sessions were comprised of two online sessions for FRC programme staff, a face-to-face session for the FRC management team, and an online session for the FRC financial team. Learning objectives for the sessions were as follows: enhancing participants' understanding of disability inclusion within the FRC project cycle and reinforcing the importance of collaboration with OPDs.



2.5 Advancing gender equality and inclusion across the Programme

Inclusion is one of FRC's four strategic drivers, and gender and disability inclusion are important cross-cutting themes in the Development Programme for 2022–2025. Everyone at the FRC has a shared responsibility for both gender and disability mainstreaming. To guide this work, the implementation is aligned with the IFRC Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) Policy and Framework, as well as the Minimum Standards for Emergencies. The implementation was supported by a regional Disability and Gender Adviser based in Nairobi, along with a HQ Senior Specialist on PGI focusing on knowledge development and advocacy work starting from August 2022.

The new Programme phase was started by conducting a Gender and Disability baseline with a focus on Africa. This study aimed to gain deeper understanding of the current situation of gender and inclusion within FRC's projects and partner organisations. Furthermore, the baseline findings provided important information for further defining the necessary actions in the new Programme phase.

Throughout the project planning processes, the regional Disability and Gender Adviser provided support in several countries, including Zimbabwe, Burundi, South Sudan, Kenya, and Ethiopia. As a result, all new projects in Africa now incorporate targeted and mainstreamed actions on PGI. Budget allocations have also been designated to support these initiatives. In Nepal, the REDI project's EVCA exercise conducted in 2022 adopted an inclusive and diverse approach. The exercise involved 52 percent women and 18 percent of persons with disabilities. Separate focus groups discussions were held with vulnerable groups, and consultations took place with PGI focal persons and units. Additionally, local authorities supporting gender-based violence survivors were engaged in the process.

As a result of these efforts, several positive outcomes were observed. Firstly, project teams gained better understanding of what disability inclusion means in practice at the project level. Secondly, by engaging directly with persons with disabilities, their issues and challenges became more visible and tangible within the communities. Lastly, field visits and discussions also contributed to the project teams' broader understanding of gender mainstreaming, extending beyond activities related to sexual and reproductive health and rights or gender-based violence. It encouraged the integration of gender consideration into other areas such as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

PGI organisational assessments (PGI-OA) in Sierra Leone and Malawi were conducted with support from the IFRC and funding from the Icelandic Red Cross. These assessments aimed to provide guidance for FRC's PGI National Society Development support in these countries. Furthermore, two disability inclusion assessments were carried out together with the local Red Cross partners for ongoing or ending MFA projects: the Kenya SRHR/GBV and disability inclusion project, and the Malawi COMREP project.

A mapping exercise was completed to identify potential partner organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in several countries. In most countries, sustainable links have been established with OPDs, ensuring their active involvement in project implementation. In Malawi for instance, the Federation of Disability Organisation in Malawi (FEDOMA) and District Disability Forums conducted a training for the newly formed Area Disability Forum (ADF). This training equipped them with the necessary knowledge and skills to advocate for the rights and participation of persons with disabilities. Following the training, the ADF facilitated the formation of village disability forums, which will help to ensure that persons with disabilities are linked to the right service providers and have access to the assistance they need. Similarly, in Nepal and Myanmar, the respective National Societies have established links with the local Abilis Foundation teams.

Accessibility and reasonable accommodation were increasingly considered in several projects. In Sierra Leone, the programme reached a total of 142 persons with disabilities. To facilitate their increased participation, the project implemented reasonable accommodations, such as sign language interpretation, transportation arrangements, and the use of accessible venues or facilities. These measures created a more inclusive environment and ensured that persons with disabilities could actively participate and benefit from the project. In Afghanistan, improvements were made to WASH facilities, including the incorporation of accessibility features. These upgrades have been reported to contribute to increased school attendance. In Malawi, the WASH activities included the construction of 28 latrines in schools that were both accessible and sensitive to MHM needs. These initiatives greatly improved access to safe and hygienic sanitation facilities for all students, including those with disabilities. As a result of increased attention to accessibility, which is a prerequisite for inclusion, the number of persons with disabilities benefitting from the projects in 2022, both as beneficiaries and volunteers, increased. It is important to maintain and further enhance this positive development in 2023 and beyond.

While raising awareness about sensitive issues such as child marriage and SGBV is a key part of the health projects, it is equally vital to address the underlying causes, such as equal educational opportunities for girls, improved security, and economic conditions. In many projects, special attention was increasingly paid on involving men as key decision-makers and as gatekeepers of social norms that continuously affect women and girls. Gender mainstreaming, agency and meaningful participation of excluded groups have been central to all projects, resulting in several positive changes in 2022:

- In Myanmar, Mothers' Clubs have empowered women by providing a platform for discussions, decision-making, and boosting self-confidence. This has led to increased representation of women in Village Development Committees, with approximately 40 percent now serving as decision-makers. Women have become more transparent and outspoken, advocating for their communities, and working towards greater resilience. Efforts have also been made to include persons with disabilities as community volunteers, prioritising their needs and suggestions for better accessibility.

- In Nepal, measures and criteria have been implemented to ensure the inclusion and representation of vulnerable groups in decision-making and community development initiatives. These efforts align with PGI standards and have contributed to more inclusive and effective project implementation. For instance, a criterion is in place to ensure a minimum representation of 33 percent from Dalits, people with disabilities, and women in community decision-making and local committees, such as Community Disaster and Climate Resilience Committees and Water User Committees.
- In Sierra Leone, the implementation of village lending and savings schemes, as well as adolescent income generation activities, has strengthened women's financial inclusion and increased their voices in matters that affect them. Out of the 21 water point committees established and trained in 2022, 46 percent of the members are women, marking a positive improvement in patriarchal communities. Additionally, livelihood improvement initiatives have resulted in 27 adolescent mothers re-enrolling in schools.
- In Afghanistan, both male and female volunteers have actively participated in the project. Female volunteers, grandmother committees, and female members of shuras have facilitated access between the Afghan Red Crescent Society and female community members in health and WASH activities.
- In Malawi, the project emphasised the inclusion of persons with disabilities, actively encouraging their participation in all activities conducted in 2022. Efforts were made to identify persons with disabilities to join Mothers' and Husbands' Clubs. Similarly, Girls' and Boys' Clubs were established in an inclusive and participatory manner, ensuring the involvement of girls and boys with disabilities.

3. Achievements in Communication, Global Education and Advocacy in 2022

3.1 Development communication

The overarching goal of FRC in development communication is to enhance awareness, comprehension, and trust regarding development cooperation among the Finnish public. During the year 2022, the primary forms of communication materials produced included social media posts incorporating text, photos, videos, or links, as well as website and magazine articles, and press releases. These diverse channels were utilised to cover a range of significant topics such as the crisis in Ukraine and FRC's response, climate change and its effects, and the invaluable contributions of local volunteers.

In 2022, FRC's international communications concentrated highly on the Ukraine crisis. This emphasis was evident in the social media statistics, as there was a surge in interest among the audience on every platform. Posts about international aid on FRC's social media channels from the beginning of March until the end of May received over 1,000 comments. Another topic that the FRC highlighted was the drought in the Horn of Africa and the Movement-wide response.

In 2022, there was a steady growth in its social media audience. The number of FRC Facebook followers increased by nearly 3%, while the number of Twitter followers saw a rise of 5%. The number of Instagram followers surged by 20%, and the number of LinkedIn followers grew by 25%. These figures demonstrate a remarkable increase in FRC's online presence, which can be at least in part contributed to the Ukraine crisis.

Moreover, FRC's social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, collectively garnered a total of 17,580,437 impressions, reaching an all-time high. As of now, there are no plans to expand FRC's social media presence to new platforms. The contents published on FRC's social media channels were produced by the HQ staff, field staff, partners, and the Field Communications Unit.

Additionally, the FRC witnessed a substantial increase in website visitors compared to the previous year, with monthly page views soaring by 75%. The most frequently visited page in regard to international aid was the dedicated page that provided regular updates on FRC's efforts in response to the Ukraine crisis. This page attracted a significant amount of traffic as individuals sought the latest information on FRC's work and initiatives addressing the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. It garnered 175,700 page views.

In 2022, several Field Communication Unit (FCU) missions were executed successfully, resulting in high quality photos, videos, and stories of FRC's work. With a wide number of channels to make use of, the material was extensively disseminated in the Avun Maailma and Riskien Keskellä magazines, website and social media channels. In Malawi, material was gathered for the use of Hunger Day campaigning, focusing on food security and health.

Material from Ukraine and Poland was urgently called for, and a mission was conducted once the situation escalated to communicate on our efforts in support of the refugees. An FCU-mission around the hunger crisis in East Africa was also organised in cooperation with the IFRC to disseminate information on the rapidly worsening humanitarian situation in the area where the Red Cross also has active presence. Although no direct MFA-funding was involved with this mission, the end products effectively contributed to general development communications objectives both in Finland and the wider Red Cross network, in the context of an international press release, websites, print publications and social media.

Innovative communication methods were embraced with the launch of a podcast series. The final episodes were produced in 2022. This captivating podcast featured insightful interviews with seasoned aid workers, providing valuable perspectives and experiences. The podcast still serves as an exciting avenue to further engage and inform the audience about humanitarian work and its impact. A total of four episodes were created, and each episode has garnered an approximate listening count of 200 times.

Furthermore, the FRC continued its collaboration with the Finnish Foundation for Media and Development Vikes, along with other organisations, for the Development Journalism Award. In January, an award ceremony was organised in person.

3.2 Advocacy

During the first Programme year, the focus for the FRC was on setting up the structures and resources for its global advocacy work and making plans and connections. In March 2022, a new unit for Knowledge Development and Advocacy was created to the International Aid department. During the year, follow-up and analysis of relevant policy processes, positions of Finland and the EU were made related to the thematic focus areas of the MFA Programme. This allowed the FRC to strategically plan and prepare its advocacy priorities, ensuring that it could deliver added value. A lot of stakeholder and partnership discussions were conducted to scope room for further involvement and cooperation.

Significant progress was made in advocating for the recognition of the humanitarian impacts of climate change throughout 2022. Policy dialogue, networking, and advocacy towards Finland as well as contribution to Red Cross EU Office's and IFRC's global advocacy took place. The FRC positioned itself and humanitarian actors in the Finnish climate policy scene through cooperation with Finnish humanitarian NGOs, Fingo, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment. The FRC highlighted the importance and usefulness of the humanitarian perspective and expertise in the set-up of the Loss and Damage Fund. The necessity to link early warning to early action at community level and make early warnings systems people-centred and inclusive has been stressed, referring to the role of the Red Cross and to the Early Warning for All Initiative. The FRC has transmitted the IFRC key messages of urgency of climate (mitigation) action, locally led adaptation, importance of dealing with losses and damages and giving more attention to anticipatory action to the Finnish development and climate policy makers.

Averting, minimising and addressing humanitarian impacts of climate change requires new kind of financing and implementation approaches, such as the Early Warning Early Action work that has been supported by the MFA Programme. The FRC–FMI cooperation as well as the broader Anticipatory Action network, in which the FRC is an active member globally and in the Asia-Pacific region, bring about viewpoints to wider policy agendas. The FRC contributed to the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership's (REAP) aim to bring together multi-sectoral stakeholders, at country level in Nepal, regionally in Asia Pacific as well as globally and participated in REAP's risk communication working group.

In 2022, the FRC co-organised the 6th Asia Pacific Dialogue Platform on Anticipatory Humanitarian Action with the German Red Cross, the IFRC, the RCRC Climate Centre, FAO, WFP and the Start Network and remains a core member of the annual planning committee. Efforts were made to engage the MFA through the Embassies in Bangkok, Manila, Kathmandu, and Yangon. The FRC participated in the 5th Africa Pacific Dialogue Platform (virtually) and in the 10th Global Dialogue Platform on Anticipatory Humanitarian Action (in person) and contributed to the IFRC technical and coordination working groups. In Asia Pacific, the FRC maintains a strong role in the Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Humanitarian Action, which is co-led by the IFRC and FAO. The FRC has contributed to the development of technical standards for anticipatory action in the region that standardise the use of climate data, trigger mechanisms and anticipatory operations in the region, as part of the ASEAN ADDMER workplan. Regional

collaboration in Asia Pacific led to involvement in a regional DG ECHO project, a partnership between the FMI, RIMES, WFP and FRC, supporting the standardised development of forecast information in the region for AA.

The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction took place in Bali at the end of May 2022. The FRC participated in the Global Platform and contributed to the IFRC's inputs to the Sendai Framework Mid-Term Review.

The FRC promoted the Climate and Environment Charter, aimed at addressing climate crisis with commitments from scaling up adaptation, localisation, and various approaches to reducing climate risks, towards the MFA, to sign it as a supporter. The FRC also supported the development of climate sustainability policy in Nepal.

In health, the FRC participated in 2022 in consultations organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health concerning the negotiations for a pandemic treaty, which will continue until the summer of 2024. This has been identified as an important area of work for the FRC, as valuable knowledge and learning can be drawn from its community health programmes, especially the COVID-19 experience. Many of these experiences and findings were pooled in the IFRC World Disaster Report 2022 that was published also in Finland just after the turn of the year in January 2023.

The FRC also played a growing role in contributing to Red Cross–EU (RCEU) advocacy towards EU decision-making in its priority themes. Localisation was high on the agenda due to DG ECHO guidance note preparations. The FRC contributed to joint inputs and comments as well as presented the RCEU views at the High-Level Strategic meeting between various DGs of the European Commission, the IFRC and the EU National Societies of the Red Cross, which discussed localisation in the current food security crisis. Also, the FRC has been able to provide the Red Cross perspectives to Finland in several EU processes, such as the EU Council conclusions on Disaster Risk Reduction and the EU Global Health Strategy.

3.3 Global education

The year 2022 was exceptionally successful for the FRC global education programme, in more than one way. The collaboration between the FRC global education programme and Science Centre Heureka's Facing Disaster exhibition spanned the entire year. The exhibition, which opened on 20 November 2021, garnered great attention. Throughout 2022, a total of 264,489 people visited the exhibition. This collaboration is set to continue until the beginning of 2024 and will thereafter become part of the global exhibition exchange system of science centres around the world. This development ensures that the valuable content and knowledge presented in the exhibition will reach and educate audiences around the globe, creating a lasting impact on disaster education and preparedness.

On 26 March 2022 Heureka organised a special family day centred around the themes of the Facing Disasters exhibition, attracting a turnout of 2,216 attendees. As part of the family day, the FRC operated a teddy bear hospital treating hundreds of toy animals and other fluffy friends. In addition, the family day schedule featured an expert presentation by the FRC, focusing on the future of the world, with a particular emphasis on climate change.

As part of the collaborative efforts, the FRC published a special edition of its annual Risk Zones publication, which served as one element of the exhibition. The 2022 edition, titled 'During', is dedicated to look into what happens when a disaster strikes. This edition followed the 2021 issue titled 'Before' and anticipated the upcoming 2023 edition titled 'After', which will study what actors learn from disasters, and how the cycle of development restarts making sure that the next time something bad happens, communities are better prepared.

An equally important achievement was the completion of the plain language version of the Risk Zones global education teaching material package. Recent research indicates that approximately ten percent of Finland's population benefits from receiving information in plain Finnish. Plain Finnish is the fourth Risk Zones language, with Finnish, Swedish and English being the other three. Having indigenously produced Finnish plain language teaching material is an accomplishment as such, and it reflects the dedication to inclusivity and effective communication, with efforts to provide accessible information and resources in multiple languages, including plain Finnish. Planning for the next stage of improving the learning material package was also finalised with a decision to focus next on the accessibility of the material in 2023.

Lower secondary school students are the primary target audience for the Risk Zones teaching material. However, teachers play a pivotal role as gatekeepers, acting as the key target group for dissemination. In collaboration with Fingo global education cooperation, the FRC actively engages with universities to reach future teachers, providing

them with insights into Risk Zones and guidance on utilising the teaching package. By the end of 2022, Risk Zones had almost 5,000 teachers and teachers-to-be as registered users of the material. The FRC also visits municipal teachers' in-service training events, enabling access to the material and generating interest among active teachers.

The efficacy of the teaching package is evident, as teachers who have familiarised themselves with it find it useful. The average time spent by visitors on the website dedicated to the package exceeds ten minutes. Furthermore, the bounce rate, indicating the percentage of people who leave the site immediately after visiting, is low at only 10%.

Another integral component of the FRC global education programme is delivering lectures and presentations on various development-related topics. During the active COVID-19 period, most of these events were organised online via platforms such as Zoom or Teams, with a continuation of this trend in 2022. Some signs of in-person events emerging were noted during the year. Across a total of 24 occasions, lectures and presentations reached approximately one thousand individuals, ranging from school children to expert audiences.

4. Programme management and learning

4.1 Programme management

Project alignment and community engagement driving first implementation year

During the first implementation year of the FRC Programme 2022–2025, efforts were made to ensure alignment of new and ongoing country and multi-country projects with the Programme's Results Framework, broader outcomes, and indicators. The design of new projects was driven by a focus on achieving impact, while adjustments to project plans and design for continuing projects were made through annual planning and mid-term reviews.

The planning of new projects placed emphasis on community and branch engagement. In addition to employing existing assessment and community engagement tools such as EVCA, the FRC has recently undertaken pilots of innovative approaches to project design. These approaches encompass human-centred design and systems thinking methodologies, along with tools like vignettes, all aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the communities involved.

By incorporating human-centred design principles the FRC ensures that the projects are developed with a strong focus on the needs, perspectives, and experiences of the communities they serve. This approach fosters greater community involvement, enabling more effective and tailored solutions to be devised. The utilisation of tools like vignettes further supports the efforts to gain deeper insights into the communities. Vignettes provide contextual narratives that offer valuable glimpses into people's lives and their experiences and values. This qualitative information is useful in developing a more informed approach to project planning and implementation.

In 2022, the FRC further developed its Programme Results Framework. This involved defining indicators and providing guidance to ensure consistent data collection across the Programme, facilitating better measurement of key outcomes at the global level. Additionally, a Programme baseline was conducted, and target values were established for focus areas and their corresponding global indicators.

A summary of the aggregated programme-level results for 2022 can be found in annex 2. Apart from collecting data based on the defined indicators, the FRC continues to measure programme performance through baselines, endlines, and evaluations conducted for country projects.

Enhancing disability disaggregated data collection: A call for increased efforts

The FRC is committed to collecting disaggregated data and actively promotes the collection of sex, age, and disability disaggregated data (SADD) for improved accountability and inclusion in its bilateral and multilateral cooperation with host and partner National Societies, as well as with the IFRC. In 2022, data for the annual report was aggregated at the programme level from 20 FRC-supported projects. All the 20 projects were able to collect and report reliable sex-disaggregated data. However, only 11 projects were able to report the total number of people reached disaggregated by disability, and among them, data for all relevant global indicators was disaggregated by disability in only three projects. Furthermore, the total number of people with disabilities reached in these 11 country projects consistently appeared to be significantly lower than the estimated prevalence of disability. Considering the deliberate efforts made by the FRC to improve disability inclusion in many projects, the aggregated

total number of people reached, which stood at 4,924 for these 11 projects, is not considered reliable or representative of the actual figures.

Given the ongoing challenges in disability-disaggregated data collection, more effort is required to build FRC's and its partners' capacities to collect reliable disability-disaggregated data. This data is crucial for reporting, accountability, and learning purposes. The FRC encourages the use of questions proposed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and has worked to make them more user-friendly. However, adopting these question sets requires time, effort, and the support of awareness raising and training for volunteers and staff.

It is also worth noting that one of the challenges associated with collecting and reporting disaggregated data, especially in health-related projects, is the reliance on standardised reporting by health facilities. Often, national reporting systems do not include disability-disaggregated data or restrict the definition of disability to physical impairments only. This limitation adds complexity to the data collection process and affects the accuracy and comprehensiveness of disability-related data.

4.2 Evaluations and learning in 2022

As a learning organisation, the FRC is constantly striving to enhance the quality of its operations and programmes, while also adapting its activities to effectively respond to the changes in the external environment. Evaluation serves as the foundation for organisational accountability, as well as a valuable tool for improving future aid policies, programmes, and operations.

In 2022, a total of five evaluations were conducted on the projects supported by the FRC. Mid-term evaluations were carried out in Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe, providing valuable recommendations for enhancing the quality of interventions during the remaining implementation period. Furthermore, final evaluations were conducted in Burundi and Kenya to assess the overall outcomes of the projects.

To promote strategic focus and organisational learning, the FRC established a Knowledge Development and Advocacy unit in 2022 as part of the International Aid's restructuring process. This unit comprises specialists in key thematic areas, such as community health, climate change, protection, gender and inclusion, and National Society development. Working closely with programme teams and field advisers, these specialists enhance FRC's understanding, capacity and knowledge, ensuring high-quality programming in these areas.

To strengthen institutional capacities within the FRC, Thematic working groups were also established in 2022 to strengthen institutional capacities within the FRC. These groups are responsible for defining minimum standards, conducting trainings, and creating guidelines specific to each strategic thematic focus. They also aim to clarify the added value of the FRC in these areas and effectively manage strategic partnerships within those sectors. This approach allows for a more focused and efficient implementation of FRC's objectives in line with the new thematic priorities.

4.3 Risk management

The focus of the FRC on fragile and conflict/disaster-prone countries adds value to the Programme for donors by reaching out to populations in the most vulnerable situations and communities at highest risk, often in areas where many others are not involved. At the same time, the approach entails certain risks that need to be addressed, such as hampered implementation of the Programme, ensuring accountability towards beneficiaries in countries with stakeholders holding conflicting interests, and ensuring the safety and security of volunteers and staff.

Risk management is an integral part of the FRC performance management system, embedded in operational and financial planning as well as monitoring and reporting procedures. Moreover, it is also a crucial part of partnership processes of the FRC, including a thorough risk assessment done at the beginning of a new partnership and continuous monitoring as part of the formal partnership process. In 2022, for example, the FRC initiated a new partnership with the Burkinabe Red Cross Society and conducted a two-phase assessment, which involved identifying risks and opportunities, as well as conducting an in-depth partnership assessment.

The FRC's international aid-specific risk management process aligns with the overall FRC Risk Management Policy updated in 2020. However, the FRC International Aid department has continued to use and develop its PIMS-based

risk management tool for local risks. This tool better serves the numerous project-level risks associated with the scale and scope of operations and programmes implemented by the FRC.

The FRC continued to manage risks associated with international aid at three levels: projects, partners, and programmes. Risk management responsibilities within the organisation are divided, with the primary responsibility for identifying and entering risks into the system and implementing mitigation activities lying at the field level. A clear process is in place for regular risk follow-up, which includes formal risk meetings. There are also established procedures for escalating and reacting to realised risks at different levels from field staff to senior management. The FRC has a clear whistleblowing mechanism in use and disseminated to partners, staff and stakeholders. In 2022, there were no reports of misconduct or misuse.

Given that the FRC Development Programme focuses on fragile, least developed, and conflict and disaster-prone countries, the operational environment is generally high risk from security, operational and financial perspectives. The FRC has developed a comprehensive risk matrix that covers the entire Programme period (2022–2025). This matrix is updated annually to reflect the key changes in operational environment in the planning phase, and a summary of risk monitoring is made at reporting phase. This summary with details is in annex 4 of this report.

In 2022, there were three long-term programme countries to which the MFA posed specific requirements due to the change of authorities and/or escalation of internal conflict and consequent increase in humanitarian needs and deterioration of human-rights situations. These countries were Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Myanmar. To assess the feasibility of long-term programming and to identify risks associated with implementation in these challenging contexts, the FRC conducted separate analyses for each country. The FRC made necessary adjustments to its long-term programming in order to address critical needs while still retaining long-term programming and maintaining a focus on capacity building for partner organisations operating in these challenging environments.

For example in Afghanistan, the transition between two long-term programme phases was delayed, allowing for a proper evaluation and planning of the approach while at the same time supporting immediate needs and gaps in health service delivery. In Ethiopia, the security situation remained volatile, and the humanitarian needs complex. The FRC has also had some HR changes and has had to provide large-scale response, including with MFA humanitarian funding. These factors collectively have contributed to a slowdown in the implementation of the long-term programme.

The assessments and plans were approved by the MFA in early 2022.

5. Finance and administration

5.1 Finance

FRC's International Finance Unit continued to ensure financial and administrative control and lead the development of key finance and administrative processes in support of FRC International Aid. Country-level projects were followed on a regular basis by field and HQ staff. The need of programme-level budget revisions was systematically assessed to ensure optimal use of the Programme budget. In 2022, the reallocation process was also actively utilised, particularly as it was the first year of the Programme, with many project plans still being finalised, leading to changes and updates to budgets. The FRC manages the Programme as a global whole, moving funds between country-level and multi-country projects.

The original Programme framework budget for 2022 was EUR 8,134,034, of which 75% MFA funding and 25% FRC's own funding (see table 1 below). During the year, the FRC made two requests for overall budget revisions to adapt to changing circumstances. Additionally, there were two targeted requests to repurpose development funds to humanitarian aid in specific countries. The first request was made in response to the aftermath of the Tigray crisis in Ethiopia, while the second request was prompted by the hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa. These requests for repurposing were larger and more targeted compared to previous years. Given that several programme countries are in some form of protracted crisis, the FRC's programming approach already includes elements of nexus, ensuring a holistic response to interconnected humanitarian and development challenges.

The reallocations and repurposing implemented did not change the total budget value of the Programme. Budget revisions transferred funding for example from Myanmar (EUR -275,778), South Sudan (EUR -155,556) and EWEA

multi-country programme (EUR -140,556) to Somalia (EUR 388,889), Ethiopia (EUR 104,667), Nepal (EUR 102,111) and for technical support (EUR 173,907). The actual cost of the Programme is EUR 8,273,086, which is EUR 139,052 (1.7%) higher than the budget. This overrun arises from higher technical support (HR) costs and was covered by higher FRC funding. Most technical support was needed in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. Ten percent of the total Programme cost is administration cost: it covers Headquarter cost which is not directly allocated to the Programme. The FRC work time recording system shows 16,491 working hours of such work in 2022.

The Regional Finance and Administration Delegates (RFAD) played a vital role in ensuring the accuracy of financial data and adherence to FRC policies and practices. They also provide support to partner organisations and possess knowledge of local conditions. To facilitate knowledge sharing and dissemination of new policies and practices, RFADs have conducted face-to-face meetings once a year and virtual meetings three times a year. These interactions have been instrumental in promoting experience sharing among RFADs.

Table 1 MFA development framework expenditure in 2022 (EUR)

Costs	Original Budget 2022	Actual 2022
A. Programme costs	5,667,400	5,334,205
B. Programme support	75,503	87,074
C. Delegates	1,509,228	1,970,116
D. Communication and advocacy	68,500	54,382
E. Administration	813,403	827,309
TOTAL COSTS	8,134,034	8,273,086
FUNDING	Per cent	EUR
Government (MFA) funding	74%	6,100,000
FRC funding	26%	2,170,289
Interest income	0%	2,797
TOTAL FUNDING	100%	8,273,086

5.2 Staffing for the Programme

Aligned with its new International Aid Strategic Framework, the FRC aimed to employ an adaptive, inclusive and localised approach to its HR structure. This involved ensuring that technical and programmatic support was provided as close as possible to the partners implementing on the ground. As a result, there was an expansion of the field HR structure, along with a diversification of the roles and backgrounds of field staff.

The key functions are the Country Managers and Regional Finance and Administration Delegates (RFAD). Country Managers, a new role established in 2022, are responsible for the management of the broader programme and partnership portfolio in their respective countries. They are the key programme support function for the National Society and will eventually also manage FRC's budgets and operations in country. RFADs hold responsibilities for financial oversight and capacity building to enhance the partners' financial capacity. This decentralisation process was still in its early stages in 2022.

In addition to Country Managers and RFADs, the FRC deployed technical advisers who add value by providing training and support to National Societies in specific fields of technical expertise. They also play a key role in quality control, supporting project plans, conducting reviews, and monitoring activities. This strategic investment aimed to provide more targeted and specialised technical rather than generalist support.

The field HR structure is coupled with the developing of quality programme management tools at institutional level and managed by the FRC HQ from both programme and thematic support perspectives.

In 2022, the FRC continued an open international recruitment process and placed greater emphasis on recruiting staff from the regions and from the target countries to increase localisation and diversification within the HR structure. The benefits of this approach included accessing relevant technical skills and expertise, as well as improving knowledge of the regions, countries, and National Societies. However, the transition from the traditional expatriate-based delegate system to a mix of internationally and locally recruited staff has posed some challenges related to terms and conditions. Another HR-related challenge has been the identification of French-speaking staff for key technical positions. Additionally, maintaining consistent compensation and benefits has proved to be a challenge due to the combination of international and local recruitments with a traditional delegate-based contract system. This has created a need to revise the current Terms of Employment.

While the number of field staff is increasing, all field staff divide their working time between numerous projects and donors via timesheets. Technical advisers often work across continents and provide support to many National Societies. Country Managers, on the other hand, have portfolios that include projects funded by the MFA and DG ECHO, as well as responsibilities related to National Society development and monitoring the humanitarian situation in their respective countries.

In 2022, the FRC had 28 contracts under the MFA-funded Programme in Africa and seven in Asia. Some of these positions overlapped as some long-term delegates transitioned to other roles and new people started. Some were new positions as per the HR plan.

In Africa, the FRC had two Heads of Regions at the end of 2022 – one for East Africa and the other responsible for West and South Africa. Additionally, there were five Country Managers appointed in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Burundi, Kenya and Zimbabwe. The region also had three RFADs and technical advisers specialising in health, disaster management, and PGI.

In Asia, the FRC had one Head of Region, Country Managers in Nepal and Myanmar, along with one RFAD and a local finance officer. A Regional Disaster Preparedness Adviser focusing on Early Warning Early Action was also present in the region.

In 2022, the FRC started thematic multi-country programmes as pilot initiatives to advance key thematic priority areas. These programmes had dedicated staff assigned to them. The Early Warning Early Action programme with the Finnish Meteorological Institute had staff members employed and/or allocating work time both at the HQ and in the field (specifically in East Africa). The Finance Sustainability Development programme had a roving delegate who started in Finland mid-year, engaging in planning, desk work and identifying potential contexts, with the aim of being deployed to target countries in early 2023 when the implementation picks up speed. The Safer Access Framework programme, in partnership with the ICRC, was supported during the year with two staff-on-loans to the ICRC: one for the first half in West Africa, the other for the second half in East Africa. This was a new work modality, which will be assessed by the FRC in 2023.

In addition, the FRC continued to have key allocated staff at the HQ for communications to deliver the comprehensive Global Communications, Advocacy and Education programme.