1st Urban Hub Regional Meeting Report

10 and 11 March 2021

Image: IFRC

In the context of fast changing and rapidly growing urbanization of the Asia Pacific region, the number of people exposed to hazards, shocks, and stresses is rapidly increasing, leading to amplified risk and vulnerability. At the same time, people living in cities are themselves agents of change and have significant resources, skills, and capacities to bring together resilience efforts in their own communities and across their cities and districts.

The IFRC and member National Societies have been increasingly present and active to serve the most vulnerable and to support the development of more resilient communities in urban areas through local action and by influencing the Urban Agenda at national, regional and global levels.

The need for urban action is reflected in the IFRC Strategy 2030, which recognizes the high costs of inaction in urban areas and highlights the need for the Movement to develop the right skills to operate in the urban context.

In line with the Strategy 2030 and to better understand specific priorities, needs and expectations from the Asia Pacific National Societies, the 1st Asia Pacific Urban Hub Meeting provided a platform for dialogue, and interaction amongst National Societies, Partner National Societies, IFRC and other relevant stakeholders, as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, to set the course for the development of appropriate learning pathways and actions to address the urban challenges of the region.

Summary

More than 50 participants joined the 1st Asia Pacific Regional Meeting on 10 and 11 March 2021, with 14 Asia Pacific National Societies and 8 Partner National Societies amongst the attendees. This was a perfect scenario to strengthen the Red Cross Red Crescent Urban Hub Network.

The Meeting highlighted the ongoing work led by the National Societies in the region on addressing different urban challenges, presented opportunities for the Movement to engage more actively with city-level networks through the Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR 2030), and highlighted the role of the Urban Hub as a regional platform for dialogue and interaction, knowledge sharing and peer exchange within and beyond the Red Cross Red Crescent network.

Additionnaly, during the second day, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climatre Centre introduced some of the tools developed to support the work of National Societies in cities, and finnaly, the meeting opened a space for dialogue, learning and brainstorming on the technical support needs and capacities of the region and the best ways to address the main challenges defined by the IFRC Strategy 2030 in cities.

In summary the meeting achieved the following results:

- Asia Pacific National Societies urban programming experiences were showcased and learnings shared

- The opportunities for Asia Pacific National Societies, key regional and local stakeholders, Partner National Societies and IFRC technical leads to participate in the Urban Hub network were introduced

- Mapping of ongoing urban programs, events and city networks led by of Asia Pacific National Societies was enhanced

- Specific needs in technical and programmatic support from Asia Pacific National Societies were identified and integrated within the Urban Hub 2021-2023 Roadmap planning process.

Day 1: Celebrating regional learnings and National Society achievements

Day 1 highlighted the ongoing urban resilience work in the region and lessons learned, with the introduction of the Urban Hub work, the Small Grants initiatives in Pakistan and Mongolia, UNDRR's Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative, and impactful experiences in urban programming from Nepal Red Cross, Vietnam Red Cross, and Indonesian Red Cross.

Please find bellow some of the main highlights of this day:

Gwendolyn Pang, Deputy Director IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Delegation, started the session underscoring the importance of addressing the challenges the urban context imposes for humanitarian work, and the need for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to develop the right skills and the right capacity to act at the right time in cities, as highlighted in the IFRC Strategy 2030.

Later, to spark the conversation, participants were invited to answer two Mentimeter questions :

1. How does your National Society/organisation contribute to urban resilience?
2. What are the most challenging aspects for your National Society/organisation working in urban areas?

Regarding the first question, the majority of participants shared a range of contributions related to implementation of specific urban resilience programmes, active engagement with local authorities, developing specific frameworks and tools, advocacy and technical support.

As for the challenges, participants highlighted: community engagement, urban migration, linking with external partners, coordination with multiple stakeholders and politics as shown in the image below.

This quick identification allowed presenters and moderators to guide the conversation and address the main concerns from the participants.

Asia Pacific Urban Context

Lucy Price, IFRC Regional Urban Risk Management Coordinator, introduced the Asia Pacific urban context and trends, and the need for the RCRC Movement to address its particularities marked by density, diversity, dynamism, understanding cities from a systems perspective to better inform RCRC resilience work at the community and citywide level.

Image: Mongolian Red Cross

Urban Hub and Small Grants

Catalina Torres, IFRC Urban Hub Coordinator, presented the purpose of the Urban Hub: a regional platform to foster knowledge exchange and innovation for urban work in the region, the main activities led by the Hub thus far and invited the participants to actively engage in the Hub Network and platform.

One of the primary objectives of the Urban Hub is to support innovation and testing through pilot projects via the Small Grants initiative. The initiative awards two National Societies CHF10.000 to operationalize learning in urban community resilience, document it and share it at the regional and global levels with the support of the Urban Hub is made possible by the British Red Cross and Aviva.

Mongolian Red Cross and Pakistan Red Crescent, the 2020 winners, presented their unique initiatives, implemented between November 2020 – March 2021 to support urban community resilience.

Image: Mongolian Red Cross

Mongolia Red Cross Society: Urban Livelihood Programming: Small Business and Start-Up Support for Rural-Urban Migrants

Undram Chinges, Social Care and Inclusion Program Manager from Mongolian Red Cross, presented how currently, one third of Mongolians are pastoral herders whose livelihood is dependent on livestock production. Climate change in recent years has exacerbated extreme winter, known as “dzud”, and livestock mortalities lead to spiked exodus levels of internal rural to urban migration. Former herders migrating to urban areas often settle in urban areas exposed to natural hazards and face socio-economic challenges due to lack of training and skilling beyond herding.

Through the Small Grants project, the Mongolian Red Cross Society aims to support those most vulnerable with livelihood alternatives to herding via small enterprise and business management training, along with disaster risk reduction training, to allow for enhanced safety measures at the household level. Following the training, selected families are awarded with seed funding to implement their projects and start their own small enterprises.

Pakistan Red Crescent Society: Equipping Emergency Response Forces in 7 Districts of Karachi and Going Digital

Asima Naseem, Program Manager from Pakistan Red Crescent introduced how the megacity of Karachi in the province of Sindh Pakistan, is home to an estimated 16 million people, and experiences a variety of natural and manmade hazards. From earthquakes, tsunami, and cyclones, to critical infrastructure and conflict - Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) have been scaling up resilience at the urban community level.

Building upon joint work with German Red Cross to improve urban resilience through preparedness, mitigation and response actions, the PRCS project aims to expand district coverage to all seven districts of Karachi, with the establishment of additional Emergency Response Force (ERF) structures in the city.

ERFs function as critical preparedness and response nodes in the city, managed by the PRCS Emergency Operation Centre. In each, staff and volunteers are equipped with basic training on First Aid, light rescue, firefighting and rapid assessments. Karachi's complexity requires tightknit coordination – to be achieved also through newly developed EOC software and new mobile app developed under the project.

Image: Pakistan Red Cresc

Image: Pakistan Red Crescent

UNDRR: Making Cities Resilient 2030

Iria Touzon, UNDRR Risk Knowledge and Analysis Programme Officer and Omar Hussein Amach, External Relations Officer and Head of MCR-RCC Secretariat, introduced the UNDRR approach to urban resilience in their keynote address. Key points included recognizing cities and systems of systems, and the need to approach disaster risk governance as multi-level and multi-hazard.

The Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative takes this approach forward, to improve cities' understanding of risk, strengthen cities' capacity to develop local strategies/plans to enhance resilience, and support cities to implement local strategies/plans to enhance resilience; while strengthening vertical and horizontal links at the city level and connecting cities with other cities to learn and share. IFRC is a Core Partner of MCR 2030, and National Societies, as auxiliaries to government, have a key role to play in supporting local governments' resilience work over the coming years through the MCR 2030 initiative.

MCR 2030 Making Cities Resilient

Image: Nepal Red Cross

Nepal Red Cross (NRCS) in Urban DRR

Rudra Adhikari, Deputy Director of the Disaster Management Department in Nepal Red Cross, introduced the country and urban context as highly at risk to natural hazards, how NRCS is pioneering urban initiatives and learnings. A key component of the urban work advanced by NRCS has been the Strengthening Urban Resilience Engagement (SURE) project, which has actively enhanced the resilience of targeted communities through its creation of enabling environments for collaboration and diverse urban DRR activities. The program to date has directly reached 973.000 people and trained and supported more than 1000 champions at the community level, which continue to multiply. In addition, NRCS developed urban assessment tools and guidelines that have been adopted by the government, amongst other remarkable urban achievements.

Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) and Coalition Building in Coastal Cities

Teguh Wimbowo, Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) explained the importance of understanding the urban context through citywide assessments and fostering strong coalitions to strengthen humanitarian action in urban areas. PMI presented the work in Ternate and Semarang to actively engage with a variety of urban stakeholders applying the City-wide Risk Assessment and Coalition Building tools with government authorities, academia, the private sector and civil society actors, to develop robust city level coalitions. As a result of the Coalition Building in Coastal Cities project the coalition in Ternate was established and recognised by the local government. In Semarang the existing coalition was enhanced and in both cities private sector companies were trained on DRR.

Image: Vietnam Red Cross

Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC) CBDRM/A and FbF

Hoa Nguyen, Deputy Director of External relations and Development Department in Vietnam Red Cross, presented their approach to Community-based Disaster Risk Assessments (CBDRA) and Management (CBDRM) in urban areas, the tools used (e.g. collection of primary and secondary data, GIS hazard risk mapping and analysis) and recommendations from their learnings. For example, the importance to work with local actors to identify suitable processes for manifold urban contexts, linking ward-level CBDRM reports to urban planning processes, such as Climate Action Plan, Urban Master Plans and Socio-economic Development Plans. Additionally, VNRC introduced their experience on managing the risk of heatwaves in urban areas of Vietnam, using Forecast-based Financing. With this mechanism the NS has developed protocols, targets and specific actions to be implemented for heatwave action.

Day 2: Designing an urban tomorrow today: Regional Urban Hub Roadmap for Asia Pacific

Day 2 focused on strategic urban discussions of achievements, challenges and needs in relation to the Hub objectives, and following select IFRC Strategic Priorities (Climate and Environmental Action, Disasters and Crises, Health and Wellbeing, Migration and Identity) to develop a wider regional roadmap for the Hub network for 2021-2022.

The participants were divided in 4 breakout groups to discuss achievements, challenges and needs in relation to the IFRC Strategic Priorities. The following guiding questions in line with the Urban Hub objectives supported the discussion:

<u>Strong Connections</u>

- What formal and/or informal connections is your NS making to inform climate actions in urban areas? (i.e. through city-wide coalitions, shared commitments with city stakeholders, etc.)
- How is your NS working on establishing strong connections for urban resilience?

<u>Knowledge and Skills</u>

- what knowledge and skills does your NS have for effective delivery of urban work?
- How is your NS developing these skills?

<u>Organisational Resilience</u>

How is your NS strengthening organisational resilience (i.e. adapting urban resilience tools and approaches, facilitate long-term planning and funding, adapt urban volunteer management and support contingency planning)?

Each group was assigned a moderator and a note taker, and using Miro board, the participants were able to contribute their written comments and discuss extensively on the priorities.

Climate and Environmental Action

Disasters and Crises

Health and Wellbeing

Migration and Identity

Climate and Environmental Action

Achievements:

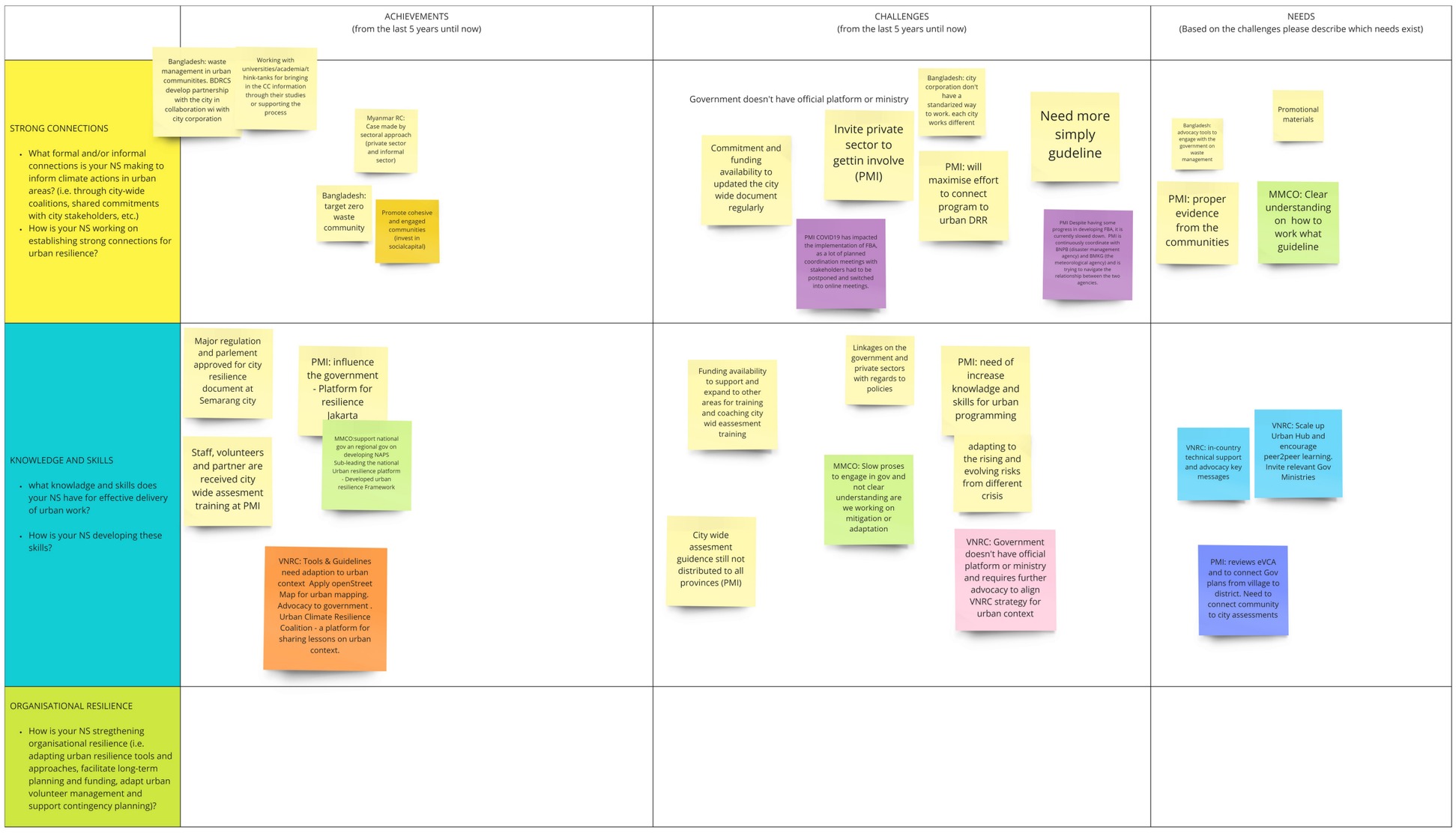
- Active engagement with universities and academia to address climate change challenges
- PMI has actively worked in Semarang and Jakarta to develop city networks and urban resilience frameworks
- Support national and regional government to develop National Adaptation Plans (NAPS) Sub-leading the National Urban Resilience Platform

Challenges:

- City corporations/municipalities do not have a standardized way of working. Each city has a specific way to work
- Engagement with ministries and other actors
- Lack of funding availability to support and expand to other areas for training for city-wide assessments and coaching
- Adapting to the evolving risks.

Needs/Urban Hub Actions:

- Increase knowledge and skills for urban programming through peer-to-peer learning
- Guidelines for National Societies focused on how to advance climate change actions in urban areas.
- Advocacy tools and materials to actively engage with government authorities on addressing specific urban climate challenges.
- Engage the Hub profile and position the RCRC AP urban climate work at the regional and global level
- Encourage active engagement with the private sector
- Collect evidence from the communities in urban areas and connect it with city assessments.
- Dissemination on urban tools at sub-national levels.



Disasters and Crises

Achievements:

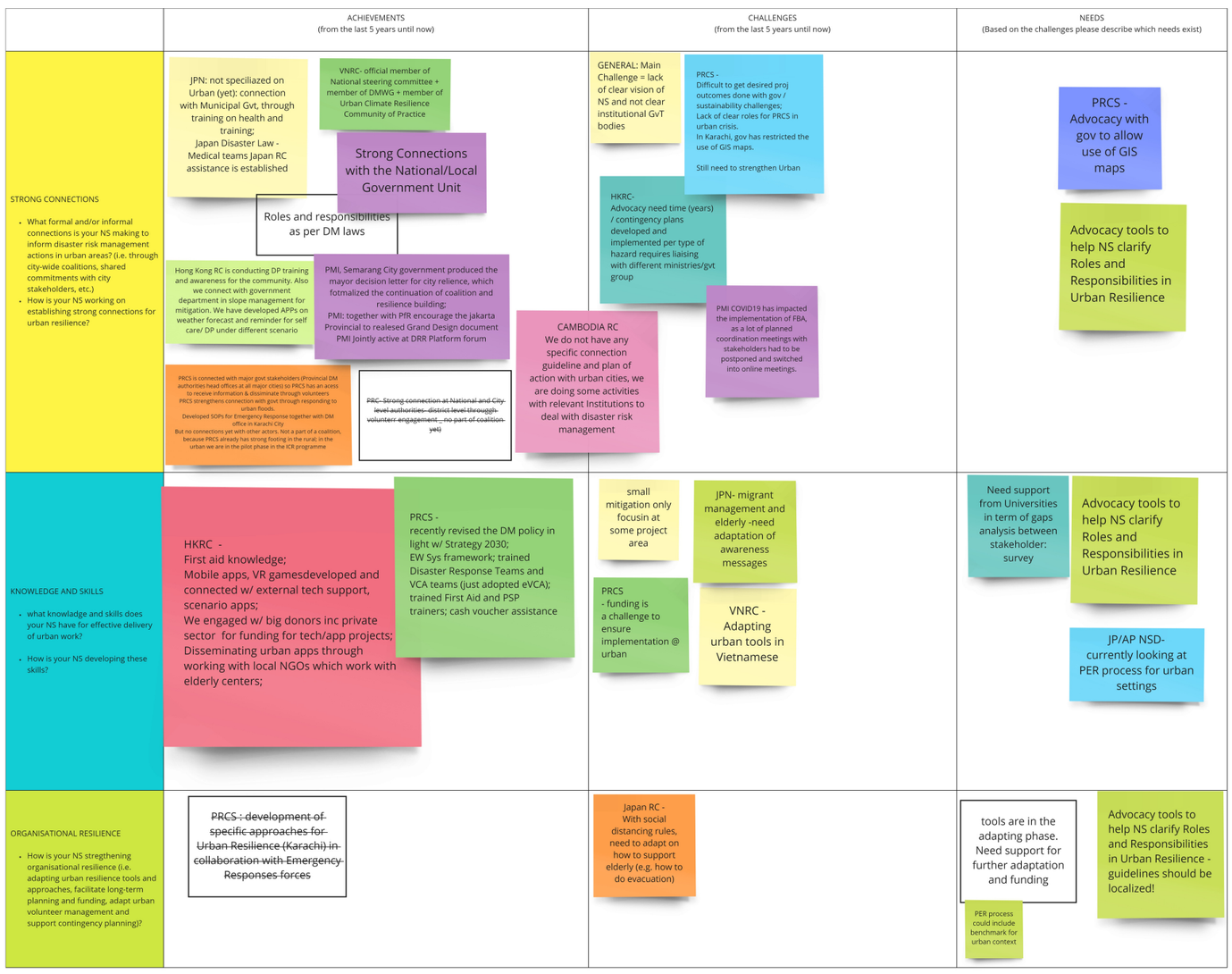
- Japanese Red Cross has established connections with municipal governments.
- Hong Kong Red Cross has conducted disaster preparedness trainings and awareness for the community and have close relationship with the government authorities. Also have developed apps and VR games for disaster preparedness under different scenarios. There is strong engagement with big donors including private sector for all these activities.
- Philippines Red Cross has strong connections with provincial and city authorities allowing the National society to have access to key information that is disseminated through the volunteers. PRC is an active responder to urban floods in Manila
- Pakistan Red Crescent works closely with city level authorities, in particular in Karachi, where the PRC has supported the city government on the development of SOPs for emergency response and is advancing actions to strengthen disaster preparedness supported by German Red Cross and the Urban Hub.
- Cambodian Red Cross highlighted that they do not have a specific plan of action to work in urban but have engaged with relevant institutions at the city level to work on disaster risk management.

Challenges

- Lack of clear vision of National Society to work in urban areas and the engagement with sub-national government institutions.
- Lack of clear role for National Society in urban crises.
- Advocacy needs time
- Development of contingency plans requires engagement with different government institutions
- Lack of funding
- Adapting urban tools to local language
- Narrow project focus
- COVID-19 restrictions have added a layer of complexity on how to manage urban risks.

Needs:

- Support for advocacy on their role at the city-level
- Need for funding and support
- Need to localise the guidelines and advocacy strategy for sustainability of the projects
- Engage in partnerships with local organisations



Health and Wellbeing

Achievements

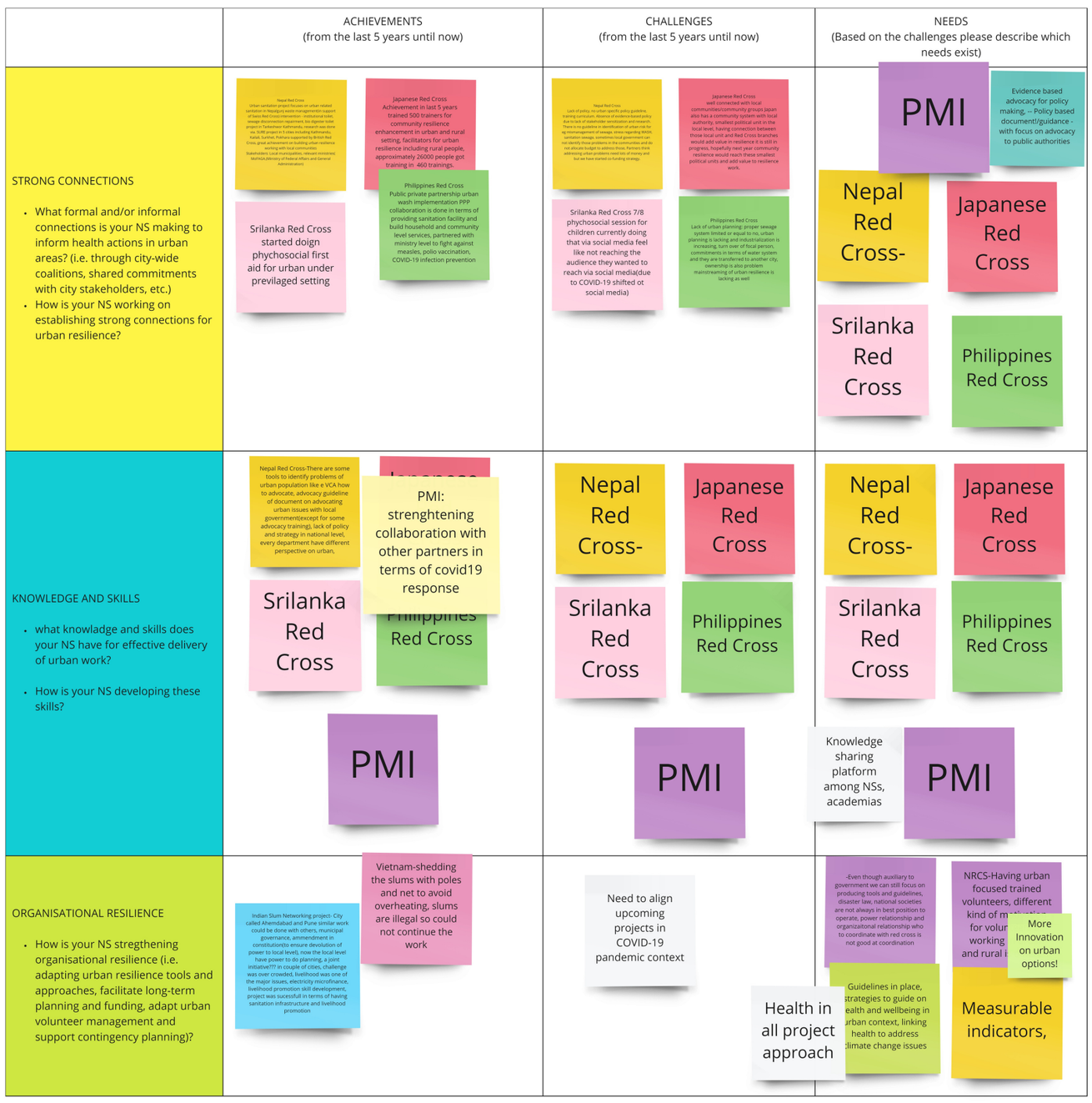
- Nepal red Cross has advanced in an urban sanitation project in Nepalgunj, focused on waste management, and the SURE project in 5 cities including Kathmandu, Kailali, Surkhet, Pokhara supported by British Red Cross, great achievement on building urban resilience working with local communities. Co-funding strategy.
- Japanese Red Cross in last 5 years trained 500 trainers for community resilience enhancement in urban and rural setting, facilitators for urban resilience including rural people, approximately 26000 people got training in 460 trainings.
- Philippines Red Cross public-private partnership (PPP) for urban WASH implementation enhanced collaboration in terms provision of a sanitation facility and construction of households and community level services, and partnered with Ministry level to fight against measles, polio vaccination, COVID-19 infection prevention

Challenges

- Lack of policy, no urban specific policy guideline, training curriculum.
- Absence of evidence-based policy due to lack of stakeholder sensitization and research.
- There is no guideline in identification of urban risk for e.g. mismanagement of sewage, stress regarding WASH, sanitation sewage, sometimes local governments cannot identify those problems in the communities and do not allocate budget to address those
- Perception of high upfront costs of addressing urban problems

Needs

- Health expertise in urban setting in collaboration with ministries of health
- Policy based document/guidance with focus on advocacy to public authorities
- Knowledge sharing platform for engaging National societies, volunteers and academia.
- Innovation for urban WASH solutions
- Exploring innovative finance for urban health



Migration and Identity

Achievements:

- During COVID-19, MRCS worked closely with the government to support with multipurpose cash
- Philippines Red Cross has established trust with government authorities to work on migration activities, especially to receive displaced people from Sabah
- Nepal Red Cross is actively working with different organisations on migration and trafficking and is developing a migration tool for Nepal context
- Japan Red Cross is integrating foreign residents/migrants into trainings for urban community resilience enhancement. Focused on improving trainings at community level
- The experience from Kenya Red Cross exploring innovative solutions through community block chain currency was shared by GRC

Challenges:

- Linking up with partners for safer access
- COVID-19
- Not enough knowledge and experience.
- Turnover of staff and lack of knowledge transfer
- Finding the right modalities to work in different contexts

Needs:

- Guidance for National Societies on their role within the urban context.
- Ability to advocate and influence
- Develop the right skills to work with migrants in urban areas
- Tools for humanitarian diplomacy in cities

	ACHIEVEMENTS (from the last 5 years until now)	CHALLENGES (from the last 5 years until now)	NEEDS (Based on the challenges please describe which needs exist)
STRONG CONNECTIONS • What formal and/or informal connections is your NS making to inform actions on migration and identity in urban areas? (i.e. through city-wide coalitions, shared commitments with city stakeholders, etc.) • How is your NS working on establishing strong connections for urban resilience?	During Covid MRCS approached by government (and vice versa) to support with multipurpose cash PRC establishing trust with government PRC Working together with Government, coastguard, others to receive displaced people from Sabah More than 5000 CGs in 2020 - more than 2000 in Urban PRC member of different DRM councils including migration and displacement Working with orgs in Migration and trafficking (Nepal RC) MoU (IFRC CCST) Cross border Cooperation for two national societies of Indonesia / Timor Leste	Linking up with partners for safer access PRC IDPs/Covid population movement during the pandemic impacted Dili municipality (Timor Leste)	Strengthening NS at the regional level to take stock on what role NS can play (BRC) Building coalitions with partners best placed to support and coordinate efforts (BRC) Advocacy / influence - IFRC NSs need to influence systems and have the right tools to do so 101 on Migration and Displacement in order to build strong connections
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS • what knowladge and skills does your NS have for effective delivery of urban work? • How is your NS developing these skills?	BRC Supporting MRCS to understand/define Migration and Displacement PRC hot meals and child friendly spaces Nepal Red Cross - Migration Focal point within IFRC, Migration Tool for Nepal Context Kenya Red Cross Community block chain currency (exploring innovative solutions) JRCS integrating foreign residents /migrants into trainings for urban community resilience enhancement	Finding the right modalities/support for urban context Linking to municipal policy and strategy - lack of cooperation between branches and communities 9JRCS) Developing right skills for IFRC / NSs Not enough experience and knowledge and not enough ressources How to integrate camps to existing infrastructure and services (MRCS)	Understanding context and needs with whom we're working Understanding the partners to enable learnings JRCS tools to identify who is vulnerable in mobile environments (e.g who is coming in /going out of urban areas) Exploring CVA as modality + also integrating livelihood (MRCS, PRCS) Learning from others (NSs in other regions) Nigeria Red Cross urban micro enterprise example PRC: Mainstreaming thematic area such as GAD, menstrual hygine and child protection policy
ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE • How is your NS stregthening organisational resilience (i.e. adapting urban resilience tools and approaches, facilitate long-term planning and funding, adapt urban volunteer management and support contingency planning)?	MRCS has engaged in capacity building, along with Afghanistan and Pakistan (BRC) JRCS focusing on improving trainings at community level	Turnover of Staff and lack of knowledge transfer Institutionalization Governmental trained workers had to leave homes in Yangon displaced - how to remain neutral and address the shelter needs (MRCS) strengthening thematic programming migration and displacement (CCST) Indonesia / Timor Leste	Cash preparedness with focus on urban areas Strengthening integrated/cross sectoral approaches and engaging communities at the onset of program planning Need to mainstream this work across all programming Capture knowledge

Key Takeaways and Next Steps

Key takeaways

- National Societies in Asia Pacific continue to escalate their work in urban areas, and explore new approches to enhance urban community resilience, while tackilng critical challenges as migration and climate change.

- Enhance knowledge of the urban context and how to navigate it is key for National Societies to boost their engagement and impact in cities.

- Active engagement with city stakeholders has been the key for the success of National Societies working in urban areas. Specific advocacy material and targeted technical support can enhance the impact of their work.

- The Urban Hub is a valuable platform to support knowledge exchange, peer-to-peero support and enhancing urban knowledge and good practices in the Region within and beyond the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

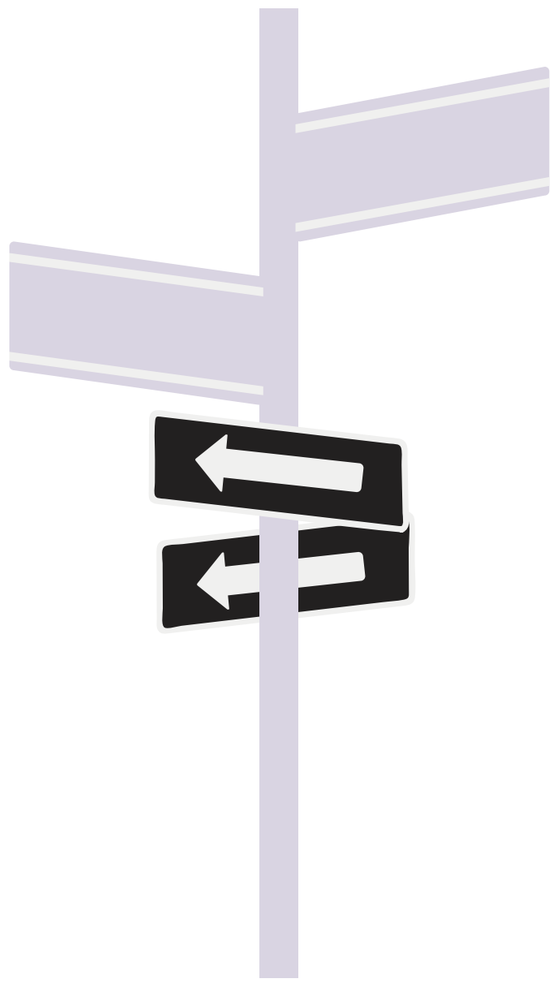
- The Urban Hub Regional Meeting provided an open dialogue platform where National Societies, IFRC technical leads and Partner National Societies presented their work and supported a participatory planning process for the Urban Hub in the upcoming years.Urgent and upscale urban action is needed to address the increasing challenges in cities along the region.

Next Steps

As National Societies in Asia Pacific continue to advance ambitious resilience programming throughout the region this meeting was just the first one of many to come.

From here, we set the course for the following next steps, together:

- The Urban Hub Regional Roadmap 2021 - 2023
- Urban Webinars Series
- 2nd Call for Small Grant Initiatives



Agenda Day 1

Time	Activity
10:00 – 10:20	Introduction, agenda and welcoming remarks
10:20 – 10:25	Who is in the room activity
10:25 – 10:30	Mentimeter Questions - How does your National Society/organisation contribute to urban resilience? - Most challenging aspects for your National Society/organisation working in urban areas?
10:30 – 10:40	Discussion on Mentimeter results
10:40 – 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 – 11:00	Urban Context + Urban Hub Presentation - IFRC
11:00 – 11:15	Small Grants Presentations
11:15 – 11:30	Guest Speaker presentation (UNDRR – Making Cities Resilient 2030)
11:30 – 11:35	Coffee Break
11:35 – 12:35	Urban experience in Asia Pacific - Presentations from NS - Nepal Red Cross - Indonesia Red Cross - Philippines Red Cross - Vietnam Red Cross
12:35 – 12:50	Q&A
12:50 – 13:00	Wrap up
	Closing

Agenda Day 2

Time	Activity
10:00 – 10:10	Recap from day 1
10:10 – 10:25	Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre presentation – Urban tools
10:25 – 10:30	Introduction – IFRC Regional Urban Priorities
10:30 – 10:35	NS priorities for 2021 – 2025 (Survey Results)
10:35 – 10:40	Coffee break
10:40 – 11:50	Breakout groups priorities and technical support needed (Market place) • Climate and environmental action in urban context • Crises and disasters in urban context • Health and wellbeing in urban areas • Migration and identity in urban areas
11:50 – 12:00	Coffee break
12:00 – 12:40	Plenary discussion and Urban Hub Roadmap 2021 - 2025
12:40 – 13:00	Wrap up and next steps
	Closing

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