



Review report on Volunteers in Action 2009-2013

This study is conducted by Bhavesh Sodagar.

Thanks to the people for their contributions and support in developing this review report, published in June 2014.

Firstly, thanks to: the volunteers from Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu branches of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) who took time to participate in group discussions and complete the survey questionnaire; governance and management of the SLRCS branches of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu; and the Red Cross Post-conflict Recovery Programme (RC PCRP) project team members (SLRCS and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)). These people were involved in the discussion during this review period and provided documents related to the project and to Volunteers in Action (ViA) beforehand. Special thanks to the government officials, the District Administrator from Mullaitivu, the Disaster Management Centre officer from Kilinochchi and the Rural Development Society (RDS) Chairman from Kilinochchi, who are critical parts of this review, and to the Regional Planning and Reporting Officer for his technical support.

**© International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2014**

Copies of all or part of this study may be made for noncommercial use, providing the source is acknowledged. The IFRC would appreciate receiving details of its use. Requests for commercial reproduction should be directed to the IFRC at secretariat@ifrc.org.

The opinions and recommendations expressed in this study do not necessarily represent the official policy of the IFRC or of individual National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies. The designations and maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities. All photos used in this study are copyright of the IFRC unless otherwise indicated.

Cover photo: Sri Lanka Red Cross Society.

P.O. Box 303
CH-1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Telephone: +41 22 730 4222
Telefax: +41 22 733 0395
E-mail: secretariat@ifrc.org
Web site: www.ifrc.org

Review report on Volunteers in Action 2009-2013
1279100 06/2014 E

Follow us on:



Review report on Volunteers in Action 2009-2013

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network. Together with our 189 member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide, we reach 97 million people annually through long-term services and development programmes as well as 85 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes. We act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by *Strategy 2020* – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed to 'saving lives and changing minds'.

Our strength lies in our volunteer network, our community-based expertise and our independence and neutrality. We work to improve humanitarian standards, as partners in development and in response to disasters. We persuade decision-makers to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people. The result: we enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.

Table of contents

Executive summary	5
Introduction	5
Scope and limitation of the study	7
Profile of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu district branches of the SLRCS	7
Overview of RCPCR	8
ViA programme	8
.....	
Literature review	10
.....	
Methodology	10
.....	
Findings	11
The volunteer profile	11
Key benefits of the ViA programme	11
.....	
Key challenges	13
For ViA programmes	13
For district branches	14
.....	
Other findings	15
Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA)	15
.....	
Key recommendations	15
1. Recommendations for the ViA programme	15
2. Recommendations for district branches	16
3. Recommendations for national headquarters	16
.....	
Conclusion	17
.....	

ANNEXES

18

Annex A: Current volunteer management/development at district branch level	18
Annex B: Impact of training for volunteers under the ViA programme	21
Annex C: Summary of responses made by volunteers	22
Annex D: Summary of responses made by branches	23
Annex E: Summary of community visits	25

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BenCom	Beneficiary Communication
BEO	Branch Executive Officer
CBHFA	Community-based Health and First Aid
DDRT	District Disaster Response Team
DM	Disaster Management
DMC	Disaster Management Committee (of government)
FA	First Aid
HV	Humanitarian Values
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGP	Income-generation Project
Kakulu	Children, aged between six and 11 years, associated with the SLRCS. It is a Sinhala word for the early (growing) stage of flower
NFI	Non-food Item
PMER	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
PNS	Partner National Society
PSP	Psychosocial Support Programme
RCPCR	Red Cross Post-conflict Recovery Programme
RDS	Rural Development Society
Shramadan	Local community-level work: this is a tradition in Sri Lanka. A group of people from a community decides to carry out some community-level work for the benefit of the community and performs that task. This includes cleaning of roads and surroundings of temples, creating paths for better access for the community to reach further, etc.
SLRCS	Sri Lanka Red Cross Society
ViA	Volunteers in Action
VIVA	Volunteer Investment and Value Audit
VM	Volunteer Management
WF-BRE	Way Forward Beyond Re-engineering
YABC	Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change
Youth	There are two categories for Youth associated with the SLRCS: 1) Junior, aged between 12 and 17 years; 2) Youth, aged between 18 and 23 years



Community Well cleaning activity
by Sri Lanka Red Cross Society at
Ampalkulam, Kilinochchi, 2011.

Executive summary

Introduction

This review report provides findings from the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's (SLRCS) Volunteers in Action (ViA) initiative for two district branches, in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka - Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu - supported under the Red Cross Post-conflict Recovery Programme (RCPCR). The study of these two district branches may reflect the situation in all the branches of the northern area. In addition, it provides the SLRCS with important data that informs the current situation and future direction related to volunteer development or volunteer management in their branches in the north. As the people from these areas are living in a changing environment, which creates challenges for the people, towns and villages, it is important to understand the people and communities where SLRCS has been engaged.

This report is focused on a selected volunteer programme, ViA under the RCPCR, with emphasis on capacity building in volunteer management by the SLRCS national headquarters for its branches, with the support of the IFRC, since 2011. It does not include a review of the RCPCR as a whole, such as the support offered to vulnerable people in construction of houses, improving livelihoods and health care.

The review was undertaken to inform the thinking and practice in supporting volunteer programmes as part of a commitment to community engagement under RCPCR. It presents valuable information and advanced understanding about the role of the SLRCS and its branches, especially for volunteers, at the community interface. It also sets out clear recommendations to assist the SLRCS and its branches in achieving a future that continues to recognize and value volunteers and support them in their work. Additionally, this review identified some of the key issues and advantages of volunteer programmes in service delivery across the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts. Some of the recommendations derived from volunteering provide opportunities of great benefit to these two district branches of the SLRCS.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), with the support of the SLRCS, undertook a review of volunteers with the aim to:

- identify types, roles and numbers of volunteers being coordinated, supported and managed by the SLRCS branches
- review capacity-building support under the ViA programme
- determine the contribution of volunteers at various levels, especially in the community
- identify and evaluate volunteer-management practices by SLRCS
- identify the value of volunteers under this programme.

Scope and limitation of the study

The study was completed in two days and included very limited structured discussions with the stakeholders on ViA support to the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu district branches. The Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA) exercise focused mainly on the information related to 2013. The study has tried to highlight the impact of ViA support on the branches. As this review is based on the discussions, the validity of the information given by interviewees has not been checked; we have tried to capture the stories related to some of the impacts.

Profile of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu district branches of the SLRCS

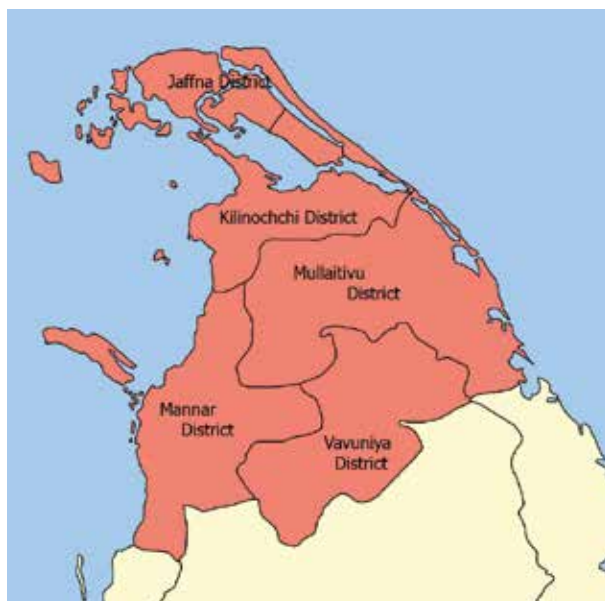
Out of nine provinces in Sri Lanka, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts belong to the Northern Province. The Northern Province records the lowest population percentage in Sri Lanka at 5.2 per cent. The SLRCS has been operational since 1936. In 2002, SLRCS adopted a new constitution and some organizational changes. The SLRCS covers all 25 administrative districts of the country and has 25 branches. The total members number nearly 100,000 while there are nearly

6,500 active volunteers. The SLRCS headquarters has been providing support continuously to its branches for volunteer programme development and management of volunteers.

Kilinochchi district branch was established in 1985 and re-established in March 2010, after the conflict situation was over. There are four divisions under the Kilinochchi district branch, which together have 13 units; three divisions each have three units, while one has four units.

Mullaitivu district branch was established in 1990 and re-established in March 2011, after the conflict situation was over. The branch has an experienced governance team. There are four divisions under the district branch, which together have 12 units; each division has three units.

Flood, cyclone, tsunami and drought are the predictable natural disasters for these two districts.



Overview of RCPCR

After the conflict situation in the Northern Province, the RCPCR has been implemented successfully by the SLRCS, since April 2010, to improve the lives of vulnerable people. The project includes owner-driven houses for internally displaced people, and has had a partnership with IFRC and other Movement partners under Phase-I. With the support of the Indian government, the SLRCS started implementing Phase-II of the project in 2012. WatSan/hygiene-promotion software intervention for all Phase-II villages/sites and hardware intervention in selected most-vulnerable villages continues in Phase-II, where volunteers play key roles at

the ground level, together with the community mobilizers of RCPCR. Below is a brief overview of the targets and current progress under the RCPCR:

Overview of targets and current progress under RCPCR		
	Phase I Bilateral and multilateral	Phase II Indian Housing Project
Time-frame	June 2010–2015	September 2012–2015
Total target	2,976 houses	16,800 houses
Total people who will benefit	11,904 people (approx.)	67,200 people (approx.)
Target to complete by 2013	2,659 houses (89%)	4,000 houses (24%)
Total people benefited by 2013	10,636 people (approx.)	16,000 people (approx.)
Construction in progress	286 houses	7,305 houses
Grant to a beneficiary family	LKR 395,000 to LKR 585,000 (including WatSan, livelihood and clay water filter)	LKR 550,000 – Full house LKR 250,000 – Repair (and clay water filter)
Staff to support the construction	1 Technical officer for 100 houses 1 Engineer for 600 houses 1 Monitoring officer for 1,200 houses 1 Reporting officer for all 1 Community mobilizer for 200 houses/families	

ViA programme

Taking a holistic view of the community and recognising the complexity of the needs of the people within it, the ViA initiative seeks to build a group of multi-skilled volunteers who will be capable of meeting the physical and emotional needs of the beneficiaries they serve. The aim is that, in the end, these multi-skilled volunteers will be assets in building strong branches, amongst those who were affected during the conflict situation. RCPCR Phase-I covers the ViA programme, which ended in December 2013, while Phase-II does not cover it. The driving force of the programme is the fundamental belief that a community is the fabric of a nation and that the resilience and success of either is mutually beneficial and interdependent. To achieve this goal will take a long time, however; effort needs to be made in implementing and properly monitoring community-level activities. Following is the short evaluation made against the objectives considered in the plan of action for the ViA programme:

Outputs against each planned Objective under ViA programme, as of today

OBJECTIVE 1: To form a group of multi-skilled volunteers with skills to meet the physical and emotional needs of beneficiaries	This has been achieved as both of the district branches have identified the importance of the multi-skilled volunteers. However, it is hard to find out whether all the multi-skilled volunteers have skills to meet the physical and emotional needs of the beneficiaries or not. Secondly, branches have no clear idea about the number of active multi-skilled volunteers involved under the ViA programme.
OBJECTIVE 2: To design and implement holistic programmes and projects within the community	Some volunteers have been involved in the development of community-based integrated plans. One of the division RDS chairmen has confirmed that the implementation of the activities includes cleaning wells and the school compound. However, we have been able to see only three community-level implementation activities during the visit, because our time was limited. Also, there was no evidence that confirms that all of the communities have implementation plans and are aware of them.
OBJECTIVE 3: To create informal platforms for intercultural exchange and dialogue	As stated in the ViA proposal, drama/dance/art workshops were not implemented. Through Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC), the capacity building in this area has been enhanced but, as the programme is ending, it will be a challenge for branches to progress in this area.
OBJECTIVE 4: To increase volunteer recruitment and retention through creative programming	The branches have mentioned that the ViA abbreviation is very well understood at all levels. Giving multi-skilled volunteers opportunities for development is one of the attractions for volunteer recruitment but it was hard to identify any creative programming in this area. The branches do not have any clear plans for retaining volunteers. Further capacity building is needed in this area.

“ViA was the live wire of RCPCR which connected the community and the RCPCR with a sense of humanity. Local communities felt that the RCPCR was a community-owned participatory intervention because of the design, the approach and the field level of the activities of the ViA. And, in turn, it motivated and encouraged not only direct beneficiaries of RCPCR, but also entire communities, to be enthusiastically involved in RCPCR interventions from the beginning and to continue similar interventions on their own. ViA catalyzed the capacities and interests dormant in the wake of the prolonged uncertain socio-economic context in the region.”

Nimal Silva, RCPCR Programme Officer (SLRCS)

According to the logframe, as stated under the means of verification, documents related to baseline and end-line surveys and communication materials, such as news articles, documents and case studies, are not available to verify the information gathered. The branches have registered ViA volunteers in their online databases but could not verify these because of the time constraint. However, the programme includes various reports and databases such as training reports, community work reports, monthly updates, and volunteer and training databases – and a volunteer-monitoring matrix.

Litterature review

- Primary Report (provisional) 1, Population of Sri Lanka by district – Census of Population and Housing 2011, by Department of Census and Statistics (20.4.2012)
- Concept paper and PowerPoint presentation of the SLRCS's ViA component under RCPCR
- IFRC Emergency Appeal no. MDRLK002, revised Emergency Appeal – Sri Lanka: Support for internally displaced people (IDP) (20.9.2012)
- ViA training summary and individual training reports up to November 2013
- Plan of Action of Sri Lanka – IDP Recovery Programme: RCPCR (28.7.2011)
- Report on well cleaning: communities in action with ViA
- Volunteers training database maintained by the RCPCR team
- Financial records related to expenditure under the ViA programme
- Indicators focusing on volunteers from Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC).

Advance FA training by Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, at Vavuniya, from 25 to 29 May, 2012.



.....

Methodology

.....

A limited budget and the exploratory nature of the review meant that two days were allocated for the field visit to the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts. The methodology for this review of the ViA component under RCPCRP includes:

- interviews and group and individual discussions with key stakeholders for ViA interventions from Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu district branches, which include volunteers, communities, branch governance and management, the SLRCS and IFRC RCPCRP team, government, the district administrator and disaster-management centre, and the RDS
- the review of the proposal, appeal and reports related to the ViA.

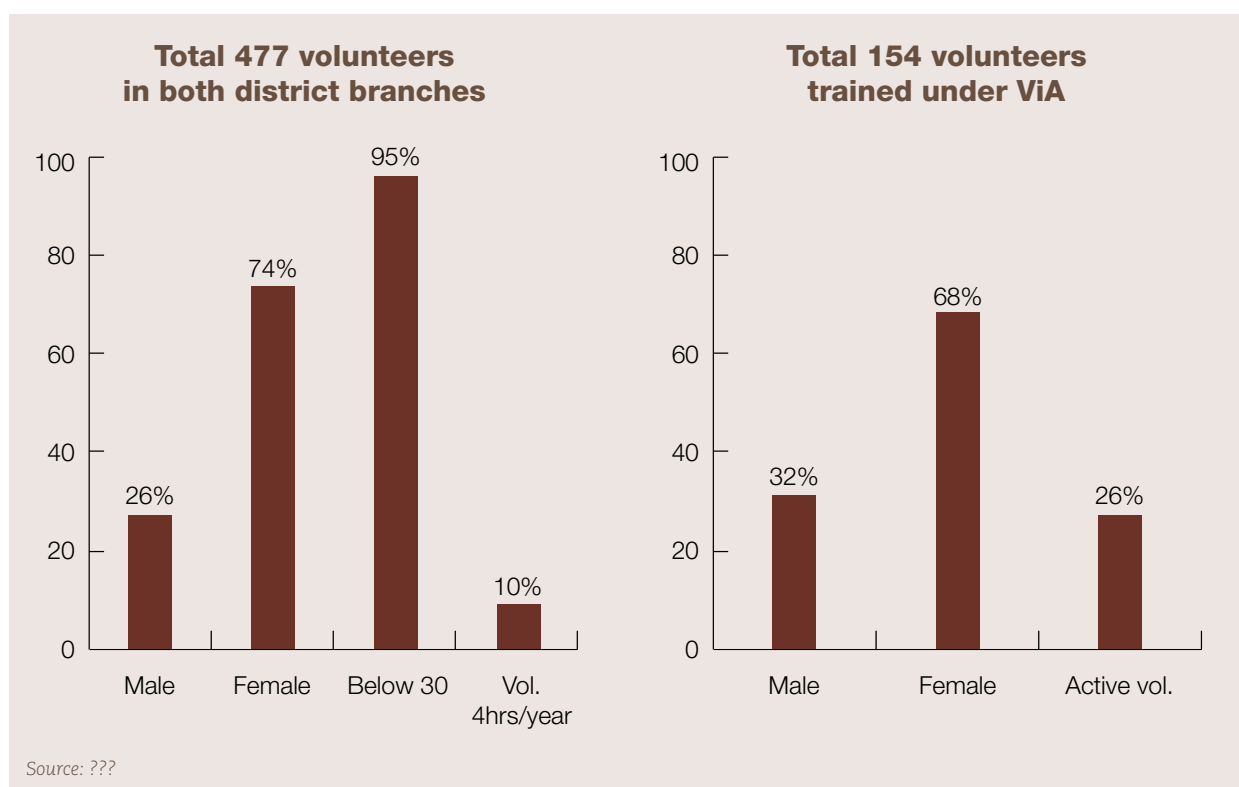
.....

.....

Findings

The volunteer profile

Together, the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu branches of the SLRCS have 477 volunteers registered on the online volunteer database (196 and 281 volunteers respectively). Of these, 26 per cent are male and 74 per cent are female. Nearly 95 per cent of all of the volunteers are below 30 years of age, while only an average of 10 per cent of them have contributed their services for more than four hours per year to the branches. The review reveals that an estimated 154 volunteers were trained under the ViA programme from both these districts; of those, females comprised 68 per cent while 32 per cent were male. According to the branches, approximately 40 multi-skilled volunteers (26 per cent) are active. On average, 10 volunteers have worked throughout the year of 2013 and each volunteer contributed 364 hours.



The communities, branches and government have indicated their appreciation of the housing project under RCPCRP during the discussion. However, the volunteers' records with the programme team don't show how many volunteers trained in each year and how many volunteers are active with the branches. Findings on current volunteer management and development in the district branches are recorded separately in Annex A.

Key benefits of the ViA programme

The ViA programme has been able to achieve its target in building multi-skilled volunteers and improving branch capacity to a certain extent. It is observed that, along with any community-level support, the volunteer-development

support provided to the local branches can contribute to the sustainability of the community-development initiatives. The abbreviation 'ViA' is well recognized at all levels.

"ViA was a most-successful programme for developing the capacity of the branch to deliver humanitarian services to the most vulnerable community in our district. Mullaitivu district is worst affected by the natural and manmade disasters."

S. Nagarathnam, Hon. Secretary,
SLRCS, Mullaitivu branch

The programme has been beneficial at five different levels: communities, volunteers, district branch governance, district branches and, hence, the National Society, as well as for the government. This provides a strong basis for branches to increase community participation in current as well as future programmes, and for positioning and image building of the SLRCS. Volunteer programmes provide an extensive network for reaching out to a vast range of members within the community.

- As volunteers are empowered, they can play important roles in building resilient communities. **Communities** were benefited not only by gaining volunteer leaders but also from various community-level activities such as, in 2013, first-aid (FA) services, hygiene promotion and awareness, dengue awareness, psychosocial (PSP) support, a blood donation camp, well cleaning, infrastructure support to preschools, Shramadan¹, flood response, Red Cross awareness and event celebration such as Red Cross Day and Water Day. There were 20 volunteers (approx.), who provided their time for regular tracing and administrative work in the branches. From the interventions of volunteers this year, approximately 2,700 people benefited.
- **Volunteers** have gained multiple skills, which have empowered them to communicate better with their communities and understand their needs, develop community-level implementation plans and respond to multi-level needs. Those who were in group discussions felt satisfied with what they have done for the communities. Some volunteers felt that they have been respected in their communities and a few have gained employment with an organization (although some are still associated with the branches). The impact of the training under the ViA programme is mentioned separately in Annex B.
- People involved in district branch **governance** were trained under ViA also; this was beneficial because they gained a better understanding of multi-level programmes, the process of developing community-level activities, good governance and volunteers. This leads to increasing clarity for establishing a vision for the branch.

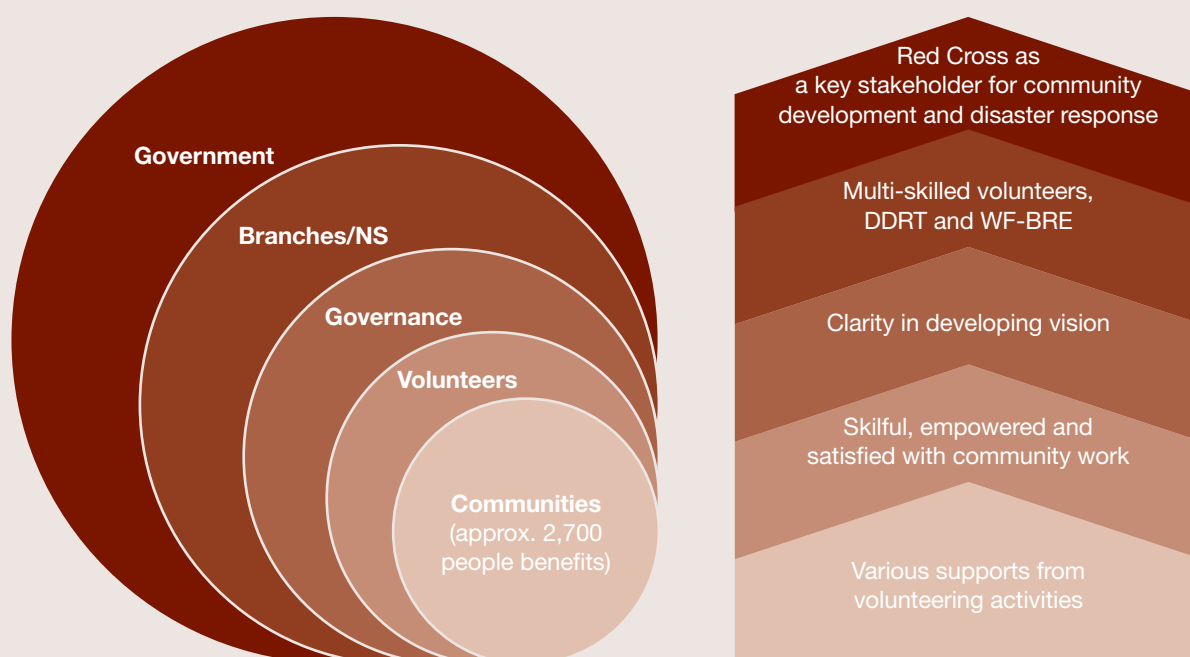
¹ Local name for volunteering – for more information, refer to Abbreviations section

- ViA benefited both of the **branches** by providing them with a pool of multi-skilled volunteers, by which the branches can implement volunteer programmes more smoothly in the future. With the DDRT team, they are now involved in the response and contribute to the Way Forward Beyond Re-engineering (WF-BRE). As the branch becomes strong, it contributes to building a stronger **National Society**.
- **Government's** disaster-management authority has better linkages with the Red Cross branches and utilizes Red Cross volunteers during disasters. The district administrator sees the SLRCS as a key stakeholder in improving the lives of communities in these districts, including responses during floods, and, hence, building branch capacity is an important element under the RCPCR.

ViA activities which have benefited a branch for WF-BRE:

1. **Disaster management:** Disaster mitigation, relief, Branch Disaster Response Team (BDRT) – assessment (government recognized the branch's assessment capacity)
2. **Health care:** Blood donation, PSP 2012 (planning to organize one in 2014), hygiene promotion, dengue campaign
3. **Humanitarian value (HV):** Dissemination of promotion of HV, Red Cross history, volunteer dissemination coordinator
4. **Organizational development (OD):** Branch building, land in Puthukuduiruppu division, volunteer/youth capacity development

Summarizing the five-level impact of the ViA programme



Source: analyze based on the review conducted for ViA

Key challenges

For ViA programmes

- Discovering the **exact number of active, multi-skilled volunteers** who are working with the branches is a challenge. During various discussions, branches provided two different numbers for active multi-skilled volunteers trained under ViA, which do not match the ViA programme records.
- It is a challenge to **retain multi-skilled volunteers**, as many of these volunteers moved out of country and some into other organizations.
- **Monitoring and reporting** was a challenge, as monthly meetings with the volunteers, which were initiated during the ViA programme, were stopped because of financial constraints and other priorities of the branches. **Acquiring volunteers' reports from branches was challenging** because of the current approval system (volunteers make requests to branches and branches pass on requests to governance for approval; this sometime delays the process).
- The branches **don't have clear plans to utilize these multi-skilled volunteers**. Lack of more strategic and regular follow-up, and persuasion regarding planned activities, delayed the desired impact under ViA. This should be discussed with the branches. Only selected volunteers were trained under ViA; this would have created disappointment for other volunteers. Volunteers were recruited and trained according to project/programme needs; the exception is for emergency responses, where branches can have standby volunteers prepared for immediate responses.

“Red Cross is all about volunteers and their services to the most vulnerable people – I cannot imagine our efforts to build a resilient community without support from our active volunteers, especially the youth. This group plays an active role in rebuilding their society in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka”

Mukesh Singh, Head of Sub office, IFRC

- Accessing **working advances for the planned activities was difficult**, as without settlement of the working advance, the branches don't receive the second working advance. Most of the time, settling working advances takes time and this delays the implementation of the planned activities. Once, in Kilinochchi, the BEO left his job and the branch failed to report on a working advance. It took two months to settle the situation.
- As a result of the limited time allowed for the branches, the programme has had **limited success in disseminating awareness of disaster preparedness to community** members.

For district branches

- The **reason for not having many volunteers aged over 30 years** is that the branches cannot reimburse the cost of volunteers' expenditure during their travel to the office or field. As people lost their livelihoods during the conflict, the first priority for them is to earn money for their families. Moreover, most of the males died during the conflict situation; this is another reason for the lower male-female ratio in the total numbers of volunteers within the branches.
- **Most of the volunteers registered under the database are non-available or inactive.** During recent floods, the branch was not able to mobilize even 50 volunteers. It was observed that most of the registered volunteers with these two district branches (more than 50%) are inactive. The reasons behind this include: the priority for many volunteers to earn money for their families; the number who left the country or migrated to other districts; a number who were married; and some who, after joining Red Cross, found that there were no benefits and hence left. Refer to the story of an inactive volunteer at the end of this report.
- During the tsunami response and recovery, many international organizations paid good money for volunteering work. This has already created a mindset among the people volunteering so, when they come to Red Cross, they look for good incentives. The branches **don't have the capacity to allocate funds for volunteer management**. It is a challenge for branches to provide **any incentive requested by volunteers** who are regularly providing support to the branches during their free time. There are approximately 20 volunteers who have been providing their time without any expectations. The branches feel that they might lose some of them in the absence of any incentive for their work. The branches should have clear policies to provide incentives and these should be stated to volunteers with appropriate explanations.
- **Retention of volunteers is a big challenge.** Five trained Branch Disaster Response Team (BDRT) volunteers under the ViA programme went abroad. The programme trained volunteers, invested in them and provided good training, but they left.

Other findings

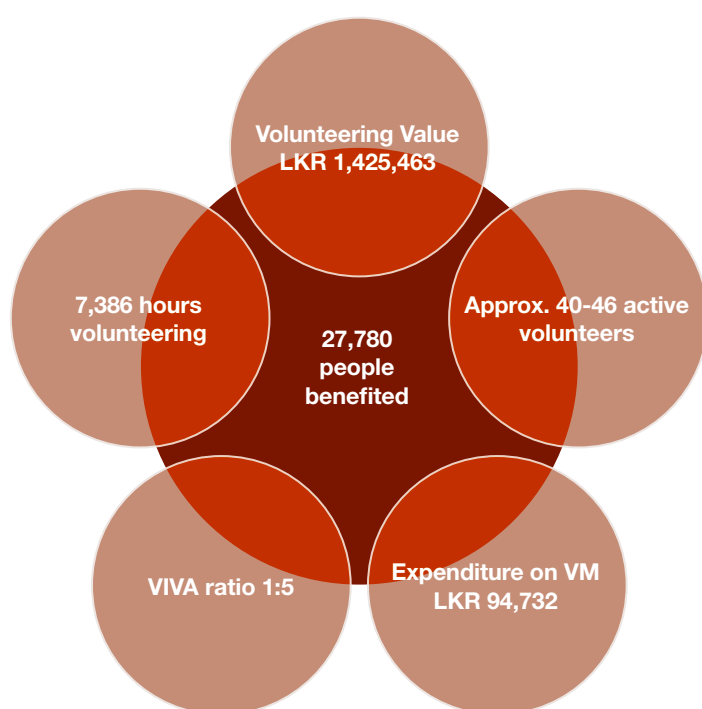
Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA)

Analysis of the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit

A. Total volunteer value (output)

During the exercises with the volunteers of both district branches, the volunteering activities or the role of volunteers under ViA programme, the number of volunteers involved in each activity and the amount of time volunteered by each was captured and tabulated in the following table. The table also shows the **total volunteer value** by calculating the value of the equivalent paid job

TABLE 4: title?						
Volunteering activities or volunteers	Hourly rate (equivalent job), LKR	Total hours per year volunteered (per vol.)	Total number of volunteers in this role	Total hours per year volunteered by all vols.	Value of this volunteer role in a year 2013 (LKR)	Number of people benefited by this role
Red Cross Day celebration	187.50	6 hrs	5	30 hrs	5,625.00	60
Water Day celebration	187.50	10 hrs	15	150 hrs	28,125.00	1,000
Shramadan	187.50	25 hrs	35	875 hrs	163,125.00	5,600
Well cleaning	187.50	12 hrs	4	48 hrs	9,000.00	300
Dengue awareness	187.50	24 hrs	20	480 hrs	90,000.00	6,800
First-aid services	187.50	109 hrs	31	3,379 hrs	630,750.00	350
Blood donation camp	187.50	12 hrs	16	192 hrs	34,875.00	215
Red Cross awareness	187.50	31 hrs	4	124 hrs	23,437.50	1,650
Flood responses	187.50	33 hrs	28	924 hrs	175,500.00	7,200
Hygiene promotion/ awareness	187.50	32 hrs	30	960 hrs	181,125.00	4,430
PSP activities	375.00	14 hrs	16	224 hrs	84,000.00	175
Total				7,386 hrs	1,425,562.50	27,780



(within the SLRCS) and multiplying that by the number of hours volunteered in each role during 2013. As these figures are based on information gleaned during the discussion, they may not be 100 per cent correct.

B. Total volunteer investment (input)

The total volunteer investment represents all the expenses incurred for the management of volunteers involved in the ViA programmes. According to the financial records of the IFRC under the ViA project, it comes to LKR 294,732 .

Total volunteer investment		
Sr	Investment in	Total (LKR)
1	Training costs	247,839
2	Allowance to volunteers	20,100
3	Other management costs (10%)	26,793
Total		294,732

The ViA programme benefited approximately 27,780 people from Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts in the year 2013.

C. The VIVA ratio

B. Total volunteer investment LKR 294,732

A. Total volunteer value LKR 1,425,563

$$\text{VIVA} = \frac{\text{Total volunteer value}}{\text{Total volunteer investment}} = \frac{1,425,563}{294,732} = 4.8 \rightarrow \text{round up to 5}$$

Which comes to VIVA ratio = 1:5

The above VIVA ratio means that, for each Sri Lankan rupee spent by the SLRCS under this programme, the SLRCS receives approx. five rupees worth of services provided by the volunteers (the value of our volunteers).

The analysis of the calculation is based on the received information which says that:

- on average, at least 10 volunteers have provided their regular services
- on average, each volunteer has provided at least six hours of work for in an event organised by the branch in an year
- on average, one volunteer has contributed a total of approx. total 32 hours per year to all activities by the branch
- about six to 10 regular volunteers are available at the branch; for three days each per week, i.e., four volunteers per day.

Key recommendations

Based on findings of the ViA programme, the following key recommendations are made:

1. Recommendations for the ViA programme

- As the programme is related to volunteers, the SLRCS policy, volunteer management and the code of conduct should be parts of the awareness at branch and volunteer level, in order to build capacity for efficient and effective management of volunteers.
- The branches should encourage the inclusion of a planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) system in the programme so that there is smooth monitoring and reporting by the ViA programme team. It is also important to follow up the impact of community-development plans. The branches can do this most effectively as they have better access to volunteers and communities. For example, the ViA programme team has the plan of action for community development but no records of its progress or completion are available.
- There are too many records/files related to volunteers (Excel files); for instance, there are lists of ViA volunteers and YABC volunteers, a volunteer monitoring matrix, activity records, etc. It is advisable to keep one volunteer records file, which can be linked to other records. Keeping different lists in separate files may create confusion and a person reviewing records may not gain an accurate picture of the volunteer profile.
- Reports of the ViA programme should include volunteer activities along with the volunteering hours; this can encourage branches to practise recording these data and to understand the benefit of doing so.
- Branches should be coached on YABC and its impact and should create a platform for YABC peer educators to engage in activities which have an impact at community level. Documentation of these impacts could be organized and shared with the national headquarters and other stakeholders.
- Based on the discussion with branches, selected volunteers and two communities, it is recommended that the ViA programme be extended for a year, focusing on capacity building of the branches to further manage and develop their volunteers.

2. Recommendations for district branches

- Review volunteer database and update the available volunteers within the branches, then foresee how many volunteers will be required by each branch to manage its programme(s) effectively and efficiently.
- Introduce a proper volunteer-management system and improve volun-

teer records by documenting volunteering hours and activities carried out during each month. It is recommended that the district branches request that national headquarters support them in volunteer management (especially in volunteer retention).

- Improve monitoring of each volunteer's field book; this could be done monthly or as often as desired.
- Establish an appropriate volunteer-recognition system with guidance from national headquarters. This includes highlighting the economic value of the contributions of volunteers to stakeholders and rewarding volunteers for their services.
- Improve awareness of the code of conduct for staff and volunteers and ensure everyone has a clear understanding of it. This should include safety and security for females as most of the volunteers are female.
- Develop a resource-mobilization plan with the help of the national headquarters and allocate an annual budget for volunteer management; this would include considering the possibility of covering the basic cost of volunteers' expenditures during field visits.
- Improve communication between volunteers and the programme team. Review options for accessing local resources and support for volunteers.
- Ensure that the division functions well to manage volunteers locally. It is very difficult for the district branches to mobilize volunteers from the district headquarters, considering the travelling time, cost and additional challenges related to transportation during emergencies.

According to the ViA programme officer, SLRCS

After the conflict, when the branch was re-established, there were no systems or knowledge within branches about how to initiate activities and which activities to undertake. With support from the ViA programme, the branches now have **contingency plans** for flood relief, capability and understanding for mobilizing volunteers, capable volunteers to run projects, and support in development and implementation of community-level plans.

Initially, under ViA, there were 120 volunteers (60 from each branch). Branches now have a good relationship with the Disaster Management Centre (DMC). ViA has been able to develop some capacities which are linked with WF-BRE.

Training in the Sinhala/Tamil language was undertaken so participants can speak to other branches. This is a small but an important element of the ViA programme.

3. Recommendations for national headquarters

- Provide guidance to the district branches on volunteer management as well as on issuing ID cards for the volunteers. Often in the past, volunteers have faced difficulty regarding their identities during their field work.
- Improve the WF-BRE targets by rethinking local vulnerability and working alongside the branches with the support of IFRC/partner National Societies (PNSs)/the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Branches provide time, capacity, resources and energy. Without this back-up, branches will not give sufficient attention to those supported programmes/activities.
- Provide training to the district branches on financial reporting, which can speed up programme implementation.
- Support branches by adopting relevant policies for protection and the eradication of harassment, and their implementation.

Conclusion

The study shows that the ViA programme, under RCPCRP, has been able to contribute to the capacity building of the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu district branches. Both of the district branches have at least 20 multi-skilled volunteers through whom they can develop and implement future community-development activities and whose services they can use in resource mobilization. We can assume that, if a branch can improve its volunteer-management capacity, it can improve its scoring in WF-BRE. It was observed that the ViA has significant impact on many levels, i.e., for communities, volunteers, governance and branches, as well as government.

Volunteers have appreciated and provided some evidence for the impact of ViA programmes at individual and community levels. The key recommendations suggested in the report could improve the results of the ViA programmes if they were implemented. Economically, this programme has provided five-fold benefits, such as the VIVA ratio of 1:5.

Explaining local level resource mobilization and its importance on a query raised by the volunteers during ViA review with volunteers of Kilinochchi branch, November 2013.



Annex A

Current volunteer management/development at district branch level

Volunteer recruitment

Most volunteers have been recruited by branches when they visited the branches or knew someone already volunteering with the branches. The branches generally use the following three ways to recruit volunteers, under respective branch :

1. People come to the branches to become volunteers.
2. Volunteers have recommended volunteering to their friends.
3. When branches need volunteers for awareness activities, they inform the local communities and recruit volunteers.

What volunteers received:

- Field books
- Some bicycles (the Mullaitivu branch has given bicycles to some of their active volunteers)
- Training
- Insurance to selected volunteers.

- **The branch has introduced a screening process for volunteers**, after an incident of misconduct by a registered volunteer. This process includes, for each volunteer, checking of certificates, the national identity card and proof that the person is a native of the respective district, a brief interview and a review of the CV and birth certificate. If the volunteer has proper documents, the branch asks them to fill only the datasheet and then enters their records into the volunteer database.
- Recruiting **volunteers of different age groups** is a good idea but, currently, most people are not thinking about volunteerism; they are more concerned about their futures and the money they need to survive. This means that it is a big challenge for branches to recruit volunteers. Hence, having **multi-skilled volunteers** will be the best option for the branches.
- The National Society has a **volunteer registration form** in two languages; one is in Sinhala and English, and the other one is in Tamil and English.
- **A Volunteer ID card** has been introduced, based on guidance from head-quarters.

Volunteer motivation

When volunteers were asked why they are volunteering, their replies included:

- To offer social services
- To give training
- To gain self-satisfaction

- To gain skills and knowledge
- To spend valuable time serving others
- To take part in cleaning wells, constructing the toilet roof, promoting hand washing
- To support people affected by disaster and conflict
- To participate in Red Cross awareness work using drama in school
- To help different communities, not only his/her area
- To support more people, improve the lives of vulnerable people
- To be recognized and supported to serve others with satisfaction
- To help others which could not be done alone, so joined the SLRC
- To convey the needs of their communities to the branch so that they can receive support
- To support needy people in cleaning and with health problems or to offer any other help
- To work with communities to identify needs and support them along with the branch
- To join the tracing service to find loved ones of the families who have been displaced.

“Because of the volunteer programme, volunteers are coming. In the WF-BRE process, we will utilize these volunteers to achieve WF-BRE targets; without them, it’s not possible. The income-generation programme (IGP) and volunteer retention are priorities for us. We will revise our volunteer database for active volunteers during next year.”

BEO, Mullaitivu branch

However, it is a tough for these people to continue volunteering services as the current economic situation in the district sets a limit to how much time can be spent on volunteering tasks; livelihood is the main priority for all the people in this area.

Volunteer retention plan

- Review criteria for volunteer selection.
- Select volunteers based on their knowledge of relevant activities (rather than on their qualifications).
- Conduct monthly meeting with volunteers.
- The branch will invite all volunteers, through advertisements in local newspapers, to make contact so they can build an accurate database of the volunteers.
- With support of the ICRC, the Mullaitivu branch has 50 bicycles. Those who have worked well in volunteering activities receive the bicycle. If anyone is inactive, then they have to return the bicycle.

Views of Volunteer Coordinator

- Normally, volunteers help me with my volunteer-management tasks when they are available.
- Sometime volunteers arrive at the office late; I don’t shout but I talk nicely with them.
- Other than a volunteer database, there is no other support from headquarters on volunteer management.
- I do not have any identity card or jacket and it’s very difficult to travel for doing field work without those things.
- We will plan to visit the well-established branches and learn from them; this would include volunteer exchanges.

- In future, we would like to have PNSs from ICRC/IFRC to offer support.
- Introduce regular meetings with volunteers during which we could discover when the volunteers have free time. The activities should be planned according to their free time.
- Involve volunteers in planning the volunteer programme.

Volunteer recognition

- Currently there are **no proper recognition/appreciation mechanisms for volunteers** associated with the branches.
- Branches will organize **funding for rewarding the work of volunteers and incentives such as provision of meals and transportation** while volunteers are providing services:
 - The branches have the potential to do this, as they did before the conflict situation when Kilinochchi district branch was able to recognize their volunteers and was, at least, contributing meals.
 - As district branches have good relationships with government authorities, they can discuss with them benefits for volunteers in the form of livelihoods opportunities. This not only will improve the financial condition of volunteers but also will contribute to their volunteering time so they can be retained by the branches.
- Kilinochchi branch has **planned to recognize the services of those volunteers** who are still associated with them (around 17 to 20 volunteers out of 30) from before the conflict situation.

Resource mobilization

- Under IGP, Mullaitivu district branch has raised LKR 20,000 to LKR 30,000 from commercial FA. Also, the branch has been asked by World Vision and Oxfam to run FA training.
- Mullaitivu district branch now has a new branch building (which was supported by the German Red Cross) and it has plans to generate funds from the 'Mulle Rest' (guest-house) and conference hall.
- In the past, Kilinochchi branch was generating funds from various initiatives, such as a computer course, a tailoring course, a beauty parlour course, commercial FA, money-transfer services (from one bank to another with support of the ICRC) and post (mail) transfer (with the support of the ICRC).
- Kilinochchi branch's future planning for resource mobilization includes running a guest-house in the branch building. Land for the branch building has been provided by the government and construction will start from January 2014 with funding support from Canadian Red Cross.
- Many division branches have received land from the government. Construction and strengthening for two division branches will be supported in 2014 by the ICRC.
- The branches feel that gathering funds from individuals is a challenge as people are currently in the recovery phase so individual donations cannot be expected.

Annex B

Impact of training for volunteers under the ViA programme

ViA has developed capacity building in multiple areas as well as in the development and implementation of the community-level integrated plan.

The following information was received from the volunteers during group discussions on the impact of training at individual and community levels.

List of training sessions in 2013:

1. Advanced FA Training (2) x 5 days
2. Basic FA Training (6) x 4 days
3. Road Safety Awareness (8) x 1 day
4. Junior FA Training (5) x 2 days
5. Good Governance Workshop (2) x 1 day [NHQ]
6. Development of Contingency Plan for Flood (2) x 2 days
7. DDRT (1) x 3 days
8. Photography for PCRP and branch people (1) x 1 day
9. Social Media (1) x 1 day
10. Beneficiary Communication (BenCom) for RCPCRP and branch (1) x 1 day
11. Hygiene Promotion and PSP for a preschool with 63 children (below the age of five)

PSP training

Two volunteers reported that they learned how to provide PSP to mentally disturbed people. Satisfied with what he learnt, one of the volunteers is practising with his family and neighbours.

“One day I went to the hospital; one lady outside the hospital was shouting. She was fighting with a lady from her family. I talked with them based on what I learnt from PSP training. Now the lady can talk with her family and her family is also happy. I am happy that I was able to help the family.”

A volunteer

“I provided PSP support to a family who came to Red Cross for tracing their son. I was able to provide this additional support because of the PSP training. This training really helped me to deal with the people and support them better.”

Tracing coordinator

Community Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA) training

Volunteers found this training was very useful. After the training, volunteers feel that they have been able to carry out better needs assessments and have improved their coordination with the RDS chairman.

In 2012, one team leader and eight volunteers cleaned 21 wells in three communities while, in 2013, under hygiene promotion, one well was cleaned on World Water Day.

“One person fell down (or drowned) a well and was taken out by another person to whom I provided first aid by taking the water out of his body and I assisted in taking him to the hospital.”

A volunteer

Basic Disaster Management (DM) training

The volunteers feel this training helped them to undertake successful management of disasters and to use related tools. Last year, during heavy rain, the tank was overflowing where trained volunteers carried out mitigation work.

Benefit of DM training from different level		
Community-level	Branch-level	Governance-level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ The community implementation programme provided a good image at community level ➔ Two wells and one overhead tank were cleaned; 1,500 students benefited ➔ ViA abbreviation is very well recognized ➔ Because of the furniture provided to preschools, students are not sitting on the floor and are happy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Have multi-skilled volunteers, hence it is easy to mobilize volunteers for any task ➔ Mullaitivu branch is new so the multi-skilled volunteers concept is very important, based on the diversity of the branch ➔ Volunteer capacity for assessment ➔ BDRT kits ➔ Recognized at community level (BDRT, PSP, FA, activities) ➔ 50 chairs for the conference hall in the previous office of Mullaitivu branch (with this, government office people also conducted a programme at our place as there is no other place where these facilities are available in this area) ➔ Two FA instructors, DM, Health, OD, HV trained people to develop an implementation plan ➔ It is a great support for the way forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Branch, division and unit-level governance members trained in BDRT and DDRT

Annex C

Summary of responses made by volunteers

Following is the summary of responses from 17 volunteers from both Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu district branches to questionnaires related to the topics below:

Learning form training

- After training, we were recognized/had a reputation in the communities
- Some interpersonal skills developed, which include communication, team-work, problem solving, conducting assessments, planning, time management and leadership
- Skills gained will definitely be of benefit in the future
- FA will be useful for family members or communities
- With the basic disaster-management knowledge, we can save lives of people

Suggestions

- Once in a year, invite all volunteers to gather and express appreciation to them for their volunteering work
- Organize exposure visits to other branches
- Have a volunteer leader at community level to communicate with the branch
- Provide visibility materials, ID cards, jackets or T-shirts for volunteers
- Offer incentives (mainly transportation and meals) while volunteers are working on tasks
- Provide training
- Develop livelihoods programmes
- Introduce monitoring mechanisms for community-level activities

Challenges during volunteering

- Volunteers need ID cards – during military checking of volunteers
- Volunteers need more skill/knowledge about PSP
- Volunteers need help to meet transportation and meal costs – this help would be an incentive for volunteering

Interesting volunteering work for volunteers

- Shramadan
- FA Services
- Tracing
- PSP
- Health and hygiene
- NFI distribution

Additional activities where they would like to work

- Children without parents – need activities for them (they have no one to care for them)
- Eight children in the family and parents don't care about them

Observations

- Volunteer field books are not used properly. Volunteers did not bring them during the review.
- Volunteering records, including their volunteering times, need to be entered in the SLRCS database.

A team of dedicated volunteers of Mullaitivu branch after completing Sinhala language classes.



Annex D

Summary of responses made by branches

The branches highlighted that the RCPCR is a most important housing project and a good service for the society as, during wartime, the communities were displaced. Livelihoods and community development are extraordinary supports to the communities. People came here to settle and the livelihoods support is a great help.

District branches' view about multi-skilled volunteers who have been trained by ViA

- ViA is the only programme support for building branch capacity for volunteer management.
- ViA programme support was good. We now have new volunteers and they have good knowledge.
- We now have 50 multi-skilled volunteers on our records; at least 20 are active. They are very useful as they can organize as well as facilitate any workshops/training sessions and also provide support in branch activities.
- Some of our trained volunteers who have jobs praise the SLRCS because ViA helped them to secure the jobs and to be able to perform their duties. A few volunteers have joined UN Habitat for their livelihoods but they provide support whenever we need it.
- This year, under ViA, volunteers have renovated two wells and an overhead tank with an extension of pipeline, and have helped in a school with PSP and hygiene, and at a YABC camp.
- Three days of YABC training was conducted and we could see positive changes in the volunteers.
- Language skills are very important under ViA. Now people can communicate with anyone.
- As it is with the WF-BRE, only those programmes that are funded by the branch are considered. If funded by IFRC/PNS/ICRC, they can't be considered under the WF-BRE. So, according to the BEO, ViA is not contributing to WF-BRE.

District branches' views about volunteer management

- Young male volunteers are fewer in numbers because of the conflict situation in the past, internal and international migration and the expectation of some payment, which branches are unable to give them.
- Volunteerism is still lacking within the community.
- People join as volunteers to become staff members, as a community mobilizer is paid more than is a member of government staff.

- During emergencies, it could be that we could not mobilize 50 volunteers, so we need to revise the volunteer database.
- Under the ICRC project at the Mullaitivu branch, five to seven volunteers are being utilized. They are being paid LKR750 per day for 12 days. They all are ViA volunteers; this created a difficulty for the branch, because other volunteers blame the branch for favouritism.
- Funding for the volunteer programme is a challenge.

Plan of Kilinochchi branch to utilize ViA volunteers in the following activities:

- Under PSP programme, providing support to the 54 elders and incorporating their ideas in Kakulu and youth activities.
- Donation of a hygiene kit to each of the elders who receive PSP support.
- Providing all basic first-aid training for communities.

Recommendations/way forward by Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu branches

- The Mullaitivu branch is aiming to initiate a volunteer-development plan from next year onwards and has recommended that ViA support is extended.
- More capacity building in WatSan is needed for the branches, as well as PMER.
- We are interested in multi-skilled volunteers but funding is a challenge.
- Along with appropriate hardware, the software component is a must; otherwise, there is no sustainability in community development.
- We need to introduce the proper volunteer-management system.
- These days, volunteers come and sit, doing nothing while, at the same time, we are busy. Now, we plan to have a youth wing in the office and will keep a TV, a Carrom board game, a computer and some indoor sports for volunteers. It is recommended that the branch should have a clear plan which links with volunteer management so that misuse is avoided.

Observation

- The division must function well to manage volunteers as it is very difficult to call volunteers from far distances – travelling time, money and transportation are not available.

Annex E

Summary of community visits

“Earlier, there was conflict between children over using chairs because we had six dining tables. Now, with Red Cross support, we have two more dining tables with 20 chairs. This is sufficient for the children to sit and have their meals. Usually those children, who are not able to hear, get angrier. We found positive change in children.”

School management

We visited three communities, two preschools in Mullaitivu and one preschool in Kilinochchi district, and RDS chairman Shivananthasivam in Kilinochchi.

According to the needs of the communities, the support includes: PSP, health and hygiene training, YABC activities, some stationery items, recreational items, water filters, and tables and chairs distributed to a preschool in 2012. This is benefiting 154 children between the ages of nine and 17 years.

The school management and the children were happy to receive support from the Red Cross and would welcome any future activities. Because of better school management, children are now practising proper hand washing and the result is a lower frequency of sickness. All students were happy with PSP support. They very much enjoyed the mouse and cat game which was a YABC activity.

T. Krishna Swami, RDS (Rural Development System) Chairman, Ambalkulam Division, said that SLRCS's **housing project support was very good and the community appreciates it.**

- Under the integrated community-development plan, all five wells in the area were cleaned and people are using the water from these wells. **Approx. 1,700 people/550 families benefited from this.** He recommends that these wells are repaired.
- Because of hygiene promotion, **people know how to source good water, make healthy food and wash their hands.**
- A total **55 preschool students benefited** with the distribution of 30 chairs and 6 tables for child and one set of table, chair and cabinet for a teacher.
- Volunteers also did **dengue awareness** in this area. In this division we have **10 – 12 volunteers** and all are trained under ViA programme. They are **always available for the community support.** Especially in rainy season, they do lots of awareness work. We are happy for their service.
- We are thankful for our community hall with infrastructure and request two toilets for the hall.

Why people do not volunteer: an interview with an inactive volunteer of a branch

Age: 22

Family members: 5 (parents, sister, brother)

In May 2011, while doing my computer course from NIIT, I joined as a volunteer with the Kilinochchi branch. Only once I came for volunteer meeting, after that I got a job in a shop. Here I support in photocopying and selling stationeries. Due to hectic schedule, I don't have time for volunteering activities. My family needs money to survive and I am the only one who earn, so I and my family cannot effort me to work as a volunteer.

When I asked her, "What if the shopkeeper allowed you to do volunteering work from the shop, would you be interested?" Her answer was: "If the boss agrees, I can do the work from the shop, but I cannot go to the branch office or into the field."



"There is excellent coordination with the SLRCS. Whenever I call the SLRCS branch, they are always available to support and help communities.

The housing project undertaken by the SLRCS initially was slow; now it is progressing at a good speed."

*Shivananthasivam,
RDS chairman – Kilinochchi*

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

Effective volunteer management, especially volunteer retention remains a challenge for many of the national societies worldwide. This review report outlines key areas to be focused during the programme/project planning and outlines the impact of a volunteering programme. It highlights the impact of combining the capacity building component of volunteers in any programme/project for effective programming for the benefit of other national societies. It also highlights the different roles of volunteers and how they are managed by the branches, capacity building support, specific recommendations and challenges, volunteer management practices and value of our volunteers' efforts. For any kind of capacity building programming, ownership is a key element. Therefore, a harmony between capacity building of volunteers as well as capacity building of the branch on volunteer management is important.

**For more information on this IFRC publication,
please contact:**

IFRC South Asia Regional Delegation

Bhavesh Sodagar

Senior OD Manager, South Asia

Telephone: +91 9810399620

Email: bhavesh.sodagar@ifrc.org

Sri Lanka Red Cross Society

Web site: www.redcross.lk

