Review Report

on the

Yogyakarta Emergency Shelter Coordination Group

Client : **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

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1   Introduction

1.1   Background and Context

During 2005 the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) developed the cluster leadership approach to address identified gaps in humanitarian response and to enhance the quality of humanitarian action by strengthening partnerships between NGOs, international organizations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and UN agencies. It is part of a wider reform process aimed at improving the effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring greater accountability, predictability and partnership (see the Humanitarian Reform Review).

In November 2005 the 15th General Assembly of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the International Federation) agreed to scale up its capacity to provide emergency shelter in response to humanitarian needs following natural disasters and to support "the Federation's offer to the Emergency Relief Coordinator to take a leadership role in the provision of emergency shelter in natural disasters." In practical terms to date the International Federation provided support to the co-ordination efforts of the International Organisation for Migration after the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, and undertook a co-ordination role following the floods in Surinam in May 2005 as an extension of the Federation's operational response.

1.2   Yogyakarta Emergency Shelter Coordination Group (ESCG)

On 27 May 2006 an earthquake, with a magnitude 6.3 on the Richter scale, struck some 20km south of the City of Yogyakarta in Central Java. It caused extreme and widespread destruction, with consequent injuries and considerable loss of life. The destruction from the earthquake was high and resulted in an estimated 1.5 million homeless people and some 628,000 destroyed or damaged houses.

With a decision by the IASC Country team to implement a cluster approach following the Yogyakarta Earthquake the International Federation agreed to take on the coordination role for Emergency Shelter and established a Coordination Group to contribute towards the effective and efficient international humanitarian response to emergency shelter needs.

Following the earthquake in Java the International Federation deployed a small team dedicated to the co-ordination effort. The scale of shelter needs created by the Java earthquake required an operational response from many agencies, including the International Federation and the experience from Pakistan (validated in Java) has shown that mixing the operational response and co-ordination activities is a recipe for confusion and overload.

The team was deployed (consisting of three international staff) almost immediately following the disaster, with an intention that it should stay until the emergency phase of the operation was over, at which point the co-ordination responsibility regarding shelter would be handed over to those who are responsible for early recovery. In the case of Java, the Early Recovery Shelter took over the responsibility from the Emergency Shelter Coordination Group (ESCG) September 15.

The deployment of such a co-ordination team is not foreseen in the rules and regulations for international Red Cross / Red Crescent activities. The rules and regulations that have been agreed within the International Federation assume that all activities are centred on supporting the National Society's operational activities or, as the case might be, supplementing the efforts of the National Society. The co-ordination teams, in contrast, are meant to provide a service to the overall humanitarian community – a service which in the context of other aspects of an international response the International Federation receives from others.

The ESCG Team quickly developed a shelter framework and terms of reference. One person focused on the collection and dissemination of information on distributions and deliveries and regular situation reports and updates on shelter data were produced. The ToRs were based on the IASC generic ToRs but failed to clarify a number of issues, including a definition of emergency shelter. The IFRC ESCG was located in the UN Office, alongside UNDP, lead for the early recovery cluster. The work of the Emergency Shelter Coordination Group was completed on September 11.

2   Purpose of the Review

2.1   Terms of References

According to the Terms of Reference (refer to annex I) the following objectives were subject of the review:

1. Review and analyse the experience of the International Federation with respect to the establishment and operation of the ESCG, with a particular emphasis on lessons to be learnt for future operations;

2. Provide a foundation for establishing policy and guidelines for emergency shelter coordination (cluster) leadership at a national level, including identification of the appropriate mechanisms and procedures to support shelter leadership at the national level within the Secretariat;

3. Provide recommendations with regard to the International Federation's leadership of future emergency shelter coordination (cluster) activities both at global and at national levels;

4. Examine if there were aspects of the Federation's cluster leadership which potentially might have or actually did compromise the mandate and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

Abovementioned objectives provide the background to the study undertaken. They provide the proper frame of reference for the review undertaken in that they put the ESCG in its proper wider context, the reform of the humanitarian system as envisaged by the UN.

The following specific issues were addressed during the review:

- The design and implementation of the ESCG in Yogyakarta, including factors and determinants which provided the ESCG's strengths and weaknesses;
- The value of linking and/or separating the ESCG and the IFRC relief operation;
- The design and implementation of the exit strategy;
- Relations with other clusters and the UN system;
- The staffing of the ESCG and the support provided from the Secretariat;
- The equipping and funding of the ESCG;
- The limitation of the ESCG's activities to those related to emergency shelter rather than transitional shelter;
- Issues with regard to visibility for the International Federation.

2.2   Methodology of the Review

The following methodology has been applied for review of the Emergency Shelter Coordination Group (ESCG):

A) Briefings
- IFRC Secretariat, Geneva;
- IFRC Delegation, Jakarta;
- IFRC Sub Delegation, Yogyakarta.

B) Field visits
- Jakarta;
- Yogyakarta;
- Village (Desa) Wijrejo, in Bantul District (Yogyakarta).

C) Obtaining documentation
Refer to **annex V** for a complete overview of obtained documentation.

D) Analysis of collected documentation related to planning, implementation, and impact of the ESCG
This continuous process was applied before and during review. In accordance with the deliverables mentioned in the Terms of Reference, the review furthermore analysed experience of the International Federation with respect to the establishment and the operation of the ESCG, with particular emphasis on lessons to be learned for future operations.

E) Interviews with the following key internal stakeholders within the Secretariat, Delegation, National Society (PMI), and Participating National Societies (PNSs)
- IFRC, Secretariat Geneva;

- IFRC, Indonesia Delegation, Jakarta;
- IFRC, Indonesia Delegation, Yogyakarta;
- ICRC, Indonesia Delegation, Jakarta;
- PMI, Jakarta;
- PMI, Yogyakarta;
- PMI, Bantul Branch, Yogyakarta;
- The Danish Red Cross, Jakarta;
- The Spanish Red Cross, Jakarta & Yogyakarta;
- The German Red Cross, Jakarta & Yogyakarta;
- The Netherlands Red Cross, Jakarta & Yogyakarta;
- The Japanese Red Cross, Yogyakarta;

F) Interviews with other relevant key stakeholders:
- UNOCHA (Jakarta);
- UNOCHA (Yogyakarta)
- UNDP (Yogyakarta);
- Oxfam (Yogyakarta);
- Plan International (Yogyakarta);
- Save the Children (Yogyakarta);
- IOM (Yogyakarta);
- Indonesian Government (Bantul District);

G) Interviews with beneficiaries in Wijrejo village, in Bantul District (Yogyakarta). (beneficiary perceptions regarding the extent to which the shelter response fulfilled their needs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in planning processes.

H) Debriefing and presentation of findings
- IFRC Delegation, Jakarta / Yogyakarta (HoD / Head of Sub Delegation);
- IFRC Secretariat, Geneva;
- The Netherlands Red Cross, The Hague;
- The German Red Cross, Berlin;

2.3   Comments on the Methodology of the Review

The following comments on the applied methodology are due:

- The field visit was conducted between October 29 and November 12. The first three days were interviews were scheduled in Jakarta, followed by one week in Yogyakarta, with the remaining three days again in Jakarta.

- Some (key) stakeholders who actively participated in the ESCG process had already left prior to our arrival, and could therefore not be interviewed.

- Some basic documentation on the background of the cluster approach was issued by the IFRC (in Geneva, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta). Significant documentation was obtained from the consultants' external contacts and relationships (refer to annex IV to view the obtained documentation).

- Diminutive documentation on the background of the cluster approach was issued by the IFRC (in Geneva, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta). Significant documentation was obtained from the consultants' external contacts and relationships (refer to annex IV to view the obtained documentation).

- One short fieldtrip in the vicinity of Yogyakarta was included but did not really contribute to answer the degree of satisfaction of the beneficiaries nor did this short trip allow us to asses the degree of the visibility of the IFRC as coordinator, even though it revealed great satisfaction with the provisional shelter solution developed jointly by the Federation with a consultant specialized in bamboo construction and the faculty of architecture of one of the Yogyakarta Universities.

- No local organisation / NGO could be contacted during the review.

- Given the tight schedule, only the Early Relief Cluster with UNDP as the lead agency could be contacted. The other cluster lead agencies that are still active could not be reached. Nonetheless a number of individuals we interviewed were active and some of the other clusters and provided us with some information as to their operations and the links with the ESCG. But this information is at best conjectural and provisional. Only an in-depth analysis would actually lead to a proper assessment of the overall functioning of the cluster process.

- Thus, the conditions under which the review took place were anything but facilitating. Nevertheless we believe that we were able to get a fairly well informed first picture, both of the process as well as the relevance and the efficiency/effectiveness of the period in which the ESCG was operational.

2.4 Structure of the Review Report

This report begins with a short analysis of the background of the cluster process. This analysis is necessary to understand our perspective of the process which finally led to the cluster approach. After the analysis the work of the ESCG and its achievements has been summarized. The assessed relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the coordination efforts of the ESCG are presented after the summarized performances and achievements.

3 Background of "The Humanitarian Reform Process"

Even though the international humanitarian system is continuously adapting to the ever changing needs resulting from man made or natural disasters, the period since the End of the Cold War has seen these needs increasing in numbers and complexity at an unprecedented scale. Since, then numerous attempts have been launched to reform this system[1]. As the two chairpersons (Egeland/Ferris, 2006) of the first humanitarian dialogue in Geneva in July2006 between the acknowledged three equal humanitarian partners, the United Nations, the NGO community and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement argued, there is a need to discuss as how to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian response given the increasing global wealth with simultaneously thousands of people dying from hunger, poverty and disasters. According to their view the humanitarian system is coming under increased public scrutiny whereas at the same time new humanitarian actors have emerged, including the military and private companies, but also additional NGOs.

The UN has taken the lead with the "biggest reform effort since the early 1990s, when the Kurdish crisis gave rise to the IASC(the Inter-Agency Standing Committee), ERC (the Emergency Relief Coordinator), the CAP (the Consolidated Appeals Process) and the CERF (The Central Emergency Relief Fund)" (Egeland, 2006). One of the first reforms that has been put into practice is the global cluster approach. A second step is the creation of the global humanitarian platform which could be interpreted as filling the gap the Humanitarian Response Review had left open in assessing strengths and weaknesses of the humanitarian system, in particular the role of the actors from the two other pillars of the international humanitarian system, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and the Nongovernmental Organisations. At the global level this is a forum to articulate principles of authentic or strategic partnership and discuss particular strategic issues such as accountability, capacity-building, security, or transitions, whereas in the field humanitarian community partnerships should be established in order to test the impact of operating or common principles of partnership and improved humanitarian performance.

The cluster approach is primarily UN-centred. The IFRC decided to take on the responsibility for the emergency shelter cluster as a convenor but retaining its independence from the other clusters that are directly accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator." This role has been taken on for the first time in the Yogyakarta Earthquake 2006. The following report on this role of the IFRC that started May 28 and ended September 11 2006 when the early recovery cluster led by UNDP took over has thus to be seen in this wider context. Besides its operational performance in the field in this (or any other future humanitarian relief operation) issue is as to how this specific cluster relates to the overall aim of coordinating relief operations in general in order to fill in gaps in these operations identified by the Humanitarian Response Review in particular.

This leadership role outside the UN-system raises two core issues: the first is fundamental as it directly touches upon the compatibility of that role with the mandate of the Federation. This issue has been directly addressed in the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Secretary General of the IFRC and the ERC. The second relates to the issue as to how this role contributes, or is unrelated, to the 2010 objectives the Federation has set itself. These two issues are the consequence of the ERC's decision to directly implement the cluster approach for the first time 2005 in Pakistan in a more or less ad hoc fashion. He thereby ignored one major issue addressed by the authors of the HRR: "one major for recommendation emerging from the report is the need to obtain a global mapping the humanitarian

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[1] For a summary of these reforms see HPG Briefing Note

response capacities that would cover not only international actions but also national and regional action, the private sector and the military" and "…also aim at obtaining a more complete picture of the capacities of the NGOs" (HRR, 2005:12). In addition "the interoperability within each of the network (UN, RED Cross/Red Crescent Movement, NGOs) and between the systems" (HRR, 2005:12) was left open. The principles guiding this particular cooperation were laid out generally in Seoul and specified in the MoU mentioned earlier. The NGOs, however, playing a central role in relief operations, were more or less supposed to integrate within this new global coordination structure.[2].

The following report can thus contribute some insights as to how this new cluster, the ERCG, did achieve what it was supposed to, but also to provide a number of issues of a more general nature that could be derived from the research in the field and relate directly to the objectives set out in the ToR, namely provide recommendations with regard to the International Federation's leadership of future emergency shelter coordination both at global and national levels as well examine aspects of the Federation's leadership which potentially might have or actual did compromise the mandate and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

4 Summary of (ESCG) Performances and Achievements

4.1 Setting up the cluster mechanism

Shortly after the occurrence of the earthquake, the Resident Coordinator in Jakarta took over the function of the Humanitarian coordinator, flew to Yogyakarta. In his telephone discussion with the ERC the latter decided to the cluster mechanism to be put in place. The decision was published on the Relief Web which, as we infer from our discussion, was therefore assumed to be known by the agencies which were already in place.

That same second day the IFRC was present in Yogyakarta with Peder Damm as the Head of Sub-Delegation in charge. In the following days the first IFRC mandated coordinator was present with Neill Baumann as his information manager. Both had already acted in the same functions in Pakistan. To formally distinguish between the operative role of the IFRC and its role as coordinator as premised in the MoU the coordinator and his team did set up their office in the UN building together with the other cluster leads and not in the office of the Federation.

4.2 The ESCG at work

The earthquake with an intensity of 6.3 on the Richter scale in Central Java/Yogyakarta that occurred May 27, 2006, and lasted for about one minute had been devastating. With a death toll of over 6000 people, 300,000 homes were destroyed affecting around 450,000 families or around 1.7 million people[3]. Providing emergency shelter was therefore a t priority in the days and weeks following. Within days the ESCG became operative. One decisive factor is that the both the leader and the information manager had already had some prior experience in the cluster approach in Pakistan. They had thus, according to the persons interviewed a very good sense of the needs and the expectations of the actors. As one interviewee stated: somebody has to take the lead in such situations! They started immediately with their work, deciding as well that the meetings should take place not in a hotel but rather in a location put at the disposal by one of the universities in Yogyakarta. NGOs quickly found out that the ESRG was active and thereby joined the various meetings. At the core was the assessment of the affected populations in the various areas.

Technical working groups were established to resolve specific issues. Some of the major INGOs resolved the problem of overlap concerning the areas for the distribution on a bilateral basis.

The ESCG with a data set putting together the information provided by government sources, PMI and the different NGO into a single data base. This information was handed over to the Early Recovery cluster when it took over. It became clear though, as mentioned above that the there were gaps in the data. Some of it is due to the lack of disaggregation of the DESA level data to the smallest administrative units (hereafter: RTs). An estimated gap remains estimated to be in the range between 18,000 and

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[2] Jan Egeland (2006) in his speech to the DAC/OECD in April 2006 stated "we have to insist that NGOs coordinate with the UN and that we in the UN treat NGOs as equals".

[3] Review of the IFRC/PMI Emergency shelter distribution, by Malcolm Johnston, 9/7/2006, p.1. The figures diverge though, as reported by Robert Mister in his Report on Mission to Indonesia, an issue we cannot go into greater detail.

43,000 households. This is due to the lack of disaggregation of the data and the questionable reliability of the data sources made available by the government to the ESCG.

According to the "Brief record of the closure of the Emergency shelter coordination group" 355,511 households have received emergency shelter using the data available. When the ESCG was closed down on September 11 and handed over to the Early Recovery Cluster, four organisations (Care, IFRC/PMI, IOM and Oxfam) Care have provided a contingency supply of 33,000 tarpaulins as a safety net for the upcoming monsoon season to fill in the remaining gaps.

4.3   Problems encountered

Was the setting-up the ESCG cluster lead a problem, respectively how did the information get through to the agencies active in this area? We were not in a position to find out how the various agencies learnt about the establishment of the cluster system. According to a UN-OCHA official the information was immediately put up on the Relief Web, implying that everybody should have known. Yet the persons we have interviewed could not give a definite answer. In reality, people very quickly found out who was coordinating the activities in the emergency shelter area by word of mouth, primarily at the Plaza Hotel in Yogyakarta, where all the international agencies present gathered. Thus, "self-coordination" seems to have been effective thereby posing no problem (except for the involvement of local NGOs). As one NGO representative formulated it: somebody has to take on the coordination role. We would have done it had it not been the IFRC. But it could also have been anyone else willing and capable to do so.

The involvement of local NGOs in the ESCG process has been limited, due to lingual constraints. The translations (from English to Indonesian) pended on the individual efforts of the participating NGOs. Aforementioned constraint hampered the exchange with (and inclusion) of local NGO assessment data. This resulted in gaps regarding the total number of beneficiaries and shelter interventions.

Much more problematic was the initial strict limitation of the ESCG to emergency shelter, transitional shelter not being within its mandate. At the operational level the IFRC, a number of PNSs and NGOs got very quickly involved with this issue. Reluctant to address this particular issue this topic was nonetheless discussed within the ESCG. As one interviewee said this was considered to be a collective need, thus the members agreed to ignore the strict division of labour (as laid out in the MoU).

Everybody seemed to be aware that the distinction into emergency and transitional shelter was somehow artificial which was overcome at least semantically by using the label "roof first". This also goes back to the political decision that every household should get a 15 Million Rupee subsidy from the government for reconstruction. Those who would accept transitional shelter would not get it. Therefore these activities were interrupted and delayed.

This lack of agreement can possibly be in part explained by the lack of coordination with governmental agencies, but also PMI, in the coordination process. The latter, according to what we have been told, saw themselves acting as auxiliaries to the government. Another aspect of this particular problem may be due to the fact that inter-cluster coordination was not as efficient as it might have been. This includes the role of OCHA in its advocacy role with respect to the government.

A final issue relates to the late taking over of the Early Recovery Cluster from the ESCG. UNDP had difficulties to nominate a coordinator which explains why this cluster was set up at a very late stage. It could or should have taken over much earlier.

5   Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Elaborated Recommendations

5.1   General Remarks

To review the performance of the ESCG convened by the IFRC we will make use of the indicators relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. Whereas efficiency and effectiveness are directly related to the actual performance of the ESCG, relevance is more ambiguous. Assessing the relevance of the ESCG seems only to be straightforward by assessing directly whether it has been useful to the various stakeholders for whom this particular group or cluster has stakeholders. It is not just a technical matter as to how important it has been for the actors in the field in a given time frame but seen from the perspective of the Federation respectively the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement to what extent that

activity is in line with the Federation's mandate and its individual members as these are the primary referents.

The different criteria enumerated in the various documents (i.e. ToR, MoU) will be used as benchmarks

5.2 The Criteria

5.2.1 Predictability / Awareness

Relevance
This criterion makes limited sense given the multiple dimensions of both predictability and awareness. Predictability means that the various actors that engage in a new disaster know in advance that a coordination centre/group is about to be, or actually has been, established immediately after the event has occurred. The decision to set up the cluster approach was taken ad hoc.

Efficiency and Effectiveness
(a) It is unclear how that information got around. In any event there was no systematic diffusion of that knowledge for the incoming actors. According to our interviews people gathered around the Plaza Hotel in Yogyakarta to find out by word of mouth who was doing what and where such coordination groups were set up.

(b) The fact that a coordinator was very quickly designated by the IFRC helped in that it allowed very quickly the different organisations to identify this group.

Recommendations
(a) Ideally a coordinator must already have been nominated in advance and links established with those organisations interested. That is the potentially active network in the field should be established in advance. For example through a specific website.

(b) OCHA has to disseminate the information where people can get the information whether or not the cluster has been set up. If so, the agencies dispatched to the field of the emergency must know where to find the coordinator.

5.2.2 Funding

Relevance
Funding (the coordination group has no power on that), in that sense the ESCG was not relevant.

Efficiency and Effectiveness
(c) According to our interviews at least some people seemed to assume that the coordinator had resources to distribute or raise funds, which is not the case. It is unclear to what extent the donors will honour the establishment of the clusters in general, the ESCG in particular.

Recommendation
(c) Not applicable, one should ask the donors – possibly find some first general agreement under what conditions the ERCG may be the focal point for funding.

5.2.3 Actual coverage of needs

Relevance
Actual coverage of needs, yes if it is considered to be a function of the resources available, no if it considered as a function of the identified needs. One could argue though that the cluster has the potential to better allocate the disposable resources collectively. Yes it was relevant.

Efficiency and Effectiveness
(d) The ESCG has been highly praised by all the participants we have interviewed with respect to the data it made available concerning the assessment of needs.

(e) Additional data collection turned out to be necessary to fill in gaps, even though this could not be done (due to personnel capacity constraints of involved NGOs). Some assessments have to be made in addition by the Early Recovery Cluster.

(d) Even though the information Manager performed extremely well that particular activity needs to be strengthened by adding additional resources (personnel). In particular it became clear that the data generation needed to be done in two steps, which has not been the case. The participants became aware that gaps had been overlooked or needed to be complemented.

(e) No recommendations applicable.

5.2.4 Avoidance of duplication

Relevance
Yes, if coordination actually is successful. This has been the case.

Efficiency and Effectiveness
(f) The ESCG contributed to avoid duplication integrate the various data in a single data base considered to be of great value by all the participants we have talked to.

Recommendation
(f) The forms for data collection could be prepared in advance (cf. coordination preparedness action suggested above). In addition: to what extent national societies can contribute to that end?

5.2.5 Identification of gaps

Relevance
Yes, if consensus is achieved and the coordinator has been able to convince the participants of the ESCG to direct respectively redirect their activities to that end.

Efficiency and Effectiveness
(g) Gaps have been identified. There is, however, the problem, that in the initial phase a comprehensive identification of the gaps was impossible. As the participants became aware the data being not disaggregated enough there was a need to make another assessment which could not be done. The consequence being that the emergency shelter issue needs to be treated again by the Early Recovery Cluster.

(h) Gaps identification would require including those local NGOs which have specific knowledge of the situation of beneficiaries. These local groups have only been identified in part and their participation has been rendered difficult because of the lack of translation.

Recommendations
(g) No recommendations applicable.

(h) A translation service is absolutely necessary if the local people/organisations are to be involved: by simultaneous translations of the meetings and translation of the documents.

5.2.6 Transparency

Relevance
Yes, if the process of coordination is open and does include at least the major players and implies a fair sharing of the information available.

Efficiency and Effectiveness
(i) The process of the ESCG did satisfy the criterion of transparency as there was a wide sharing of the information according to the interviewed stakeholders. The minutes and other written documents (agenda etc.) were disseminated through the web (among others a Yahoo group).

Recommendation
(i) Such a site has to be ready before the work of the ESCG even starts so that all the potential participants will have that information concerning the operation, the procedures etc. of that particular coordination group.

5.2.7   Accountability

Relevance

ESCG includes multiple accountabilities: each participant is primarily accountable to his or her principal. There is collective accountability even though, in the case of failure, the cluster lead will have to take all the blame. This contrasts with the clusters composed exclusively of UN organizations, accountable to the ERC directly!

Efficiency and Effectiveness

(j) the issue of accountability did not arise as a collective issue but was considered to be an issue concerning each participant individually.

(k) At least from the NGO perspective coordination is seen from an operational point of view. As long as the process provides them with value added they will participate. If that is not the case; they will simply withdraw.

Recommendations

(j) The accountability issue arises in the first place for the Coordinator as he/she is the only actor who carries in principle two hats. In order to avoid such problems Movement actors must clarify separately outside the ERCG heir respective roles and define their complementarily prior to the coordination process.

(k) The coordination in the field has to proceed from the specific needs (determined by the context), thereby providing the coordinator with sufficient prior knowledge to the extent that this is possible and give the coordinators sufficient flexibility to play their role.

6   Lessons Learned

6.1   The relevant parameters

It would be short-sighted to derive a number of lessons learned from the operation of the ESCG without considering the various parameters that might have, or actually have, contributed to the success respectively failure of the ESCG. One has to distinguish first the structural conditions as such a first set. These parameters account for the opportunities as well as the limitations of the coordination structure into which the ESCG is embedded.

As a second set of parameters we can distinguish those one can label as contextual. We thereby mean the conditions given in the field at the time when a natural disaster, in our case the earthquake in central Java, has occurred.

A third set of parameters relates to the way how coordination actually takes place, among others the experience and the personalities of the cluster lead.

A final set of parameters consists of what we label as exogenous to the actual operation, primarily the political constraints and opportunities imposed to the agencies active in the field.

Why this distinction? The reason is that each of them requires different strategies of adaptation as we will elaborate in the following paragraphs.

6.2   The structural parameters

The structural parameters of the cluster approach can be defined as the set of rules and principles determining the operations of the agencies involved. This presupposes that these rules and principles are clearly defined. In contrast to the UN agencies the IFRC is therefore only committed to a limited set of obligations, namely:

"…to provide leadership to the broader humanitarian community in Emergency Shelter disaster situations, to consolidate best practice, map capacity and gaps, and lead coordinated response. […] …it was agreed that IFRC would not accept accountability obligations beyond those defined in its Constitutions and own Policies, and that its responsibilities would leave no room for open-ended or unlimited obligations." (Guidance note on using the cluster approach, Draft, 17 October 2006, p. 3)

A first issue relates to the dissemination if not specification of the roles and responsibilities not only of the cluster leads but also OCHA as the key actions, suggested by the real time evaluators of the cluster approach in Pakistan. The same recommendations apply to the earthquake in central Java. In structural terms the promises of the cluster approach are still not well understood and in concrete terms ill-defined. In particular, the NGO community representatives we talked to were not clear as to its meaning.

A second structural parameter relates to the well-defined role of the ESCG which is only responsible for emergency shelter that is tents and tarpaulins (according to our understanding of the MoU between the IFRC and UNOCHA). Such a narrow definition does in no way take into consideration the realities in the field. Very shortly after the disaster has occurred transitional shelter activities began. As these fall within the responsibility of the Early Recovery Cluster this structural constraint can only be resolved either by the ESCG violating its mandate and including in its activities transitional shelter or by setting more or less simultaneously the Early Recovery Cluster lead. The first approach was actually practiced.

A third structural parameter relates to the fact that the cluster lead has no directive power. Coordination efforts including NGOs as major providers of emergency shelter are only successful if consensus among the participants prevails. This is based on a mutual give and take basis. As long as the ESCG is considered to provide relevant information and collectively agreed upon guidance coordination will work. In the case of Yogyakarta the ESCG provided relevant information to the cluster members. This is one of the reasons why it performed extremely well. But this points to a potential weakness of the prevailing structure.

A fourth relevant structural parameter concerns common standards. This relates to the assessment indicators, the data collection and also standards with respect to the emergency shelter packages. There are differences that could at least partially be sorted out in the coordination process even though conflict emerged with respect to the application of the SPHERE standards (one or two tarpaulins per household? among others). These differences can possibly be sorted out in the longer run but certainly not ad hoc. This is to say that a necessary condition for the cluster leads in general, the ESCG in particular to come up with a common set of standards can only be achieved in terms of capacity building and preparedness.

Fifth, the separation of the operative and coordination roles turned out to be successful. If both roles are combined, the problem becomes inevitable that the coordinator may give priority to her or his agency's activities. This has been one of the criticisms that had been raised by participants in the case of Pakistan.

A final structural problem relates specifically to the role of the IFRC and its role within the movement. To coordinate the various actors outside the Movement implies first of all a common position within the Movement, the national society where the disaster occurs, and the major PNSs active in the shelter domain. This problem was "resolved" in Yogyakarta individually in that a number of PNS proceeded bilaterally implying that structurally there is a built-in conflict between the Movement whose mandate is very broad and the ERCG mandate which is very narrow.

6.3   Contextual Factors

The coordination performance by the ESCG has been widely acknowledged and praised by everybody we have interviewed to during our assignment. This is due to a number of conditions more or less unrelated to the cluster approach as such.

The IFRC as well as major INGOs were already in the country and prepared for a major emergency shelter disaster due to the expectation of the Merapi volcano to erupt. In addition personnel from other sites in Indonesia were quickly dispatched to Yogyakarta. In addition, a number of persons had already made some experience during the Pakistan earthquake. This is why the coordination process with experienced people could start at a very early stage where the need for coordination is greatest. In another country or region the same favourable conditions may not be given and therefore coordination less efficient.

6.4   The role of the coordination lead

As we have argued above, a necessary condition for such a consensually based coordination system to work properly requires enough resources in terms of experienced personnel among others and a minimum of continuity in the leadership of the coordination group.

Even though the personnel turn-over was relatively high (at least three convenors headed one after the other the ESCG). Nonetheless this did not really hurt the overall coordination process. But, again, this might also be a particularly favourable condition which can not be generalized. According to all interviewed stakeholders, the personalities and skills of the coordinators were crucial for the functioning of the ERCG. These qualities have all been attributed to the ESCG leaders in Yogyakarta.

Information management received the lowest marks in the IASC RTE in Pakistan. The reverse is true for the ESRG. The efforts by the information manager to set up a unified data file that was continuously updated and distributed to the cluster members contributed largely to the reputation the ESCG lead gained in the process.

6.5 Exogenous Factors

As one of the persons interviewed suggested the cluster approach has been focusing too much on the prior experience of OCHA in conflict areas with weak or no governments at all. In Indonesia, in contrast, there is a strong government which turned out to be an important exogenous factor beyond the control of the international humanitarian community. The whole assistance effort, in particular the transitional shelter activities, where blocked at some point by the government. Thus, beyond the immediate international emergency relief activities programs designed for the recovery phase are clearly dependent on the prerogative of the state which is the way it should be. One could point to the fact that that the UN in general, OCHA in particular, may in part plays the mediator between the humanitarian agencies and the government.

6.6 Lessons to be learned

One important lesson to be learnt from the above remarks is that future activities concerning the specification of the cluster structure in general, the role of IFRC in particular, is that greater flexibility in defining the cluster roles may be useful based upon the experience made in the field. This implies to complement the top down approach which seems to have dominated thus far the process by a bottom-up approach based on insights derived from the practical experience.

What one can also infer from the experience in Yogyakarta is the need for the IFRC to find ways and means to minimise the potential conflict between its coordination role within the Movement and its role as a coordinator primarily of the Movement and the NGO pillar.

To successfully fulfil this role in the future a minimum degree of institutionalization is necessary in order to strengthen it and to gain a solidly based reputation in this particular domain.

7 Feasibility and Sustainability: A global Perspective

To provide recommendations of a more general nature relating to the general issues raised in the ToR is certainly asking too much of the reviewers. We therefore limit ourselves to pointing to a number of problems that we have identified. They relate to the two general issues raised in the ToR:

- *Provide recommendations with regard to the International Federation's leadership of future emergency shelter coordination (cluster) activities both at global and at national levels;*

This issue is directly related to the other one listed in the more specific set of questions of the ToR:

- *Relations with other clusters and the UN system;*

From our perspective these questions directly relate to the fundamental issue to what extent the role the IFRC has taken on within the cluster structure is sustainable. The cluster approach has been developed by the UN to coordinate in a more reliable, efficient and effective way global humanitarian action. It does not seem to have been conceived as a purely UN internal approach but rather as an attempt to set up a comprehensive coordination framework for humanitarian action at large. The justification for such a comprehensive approach is the recognition that there are gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance that need to be overcome.

Coordination of the various humanitarian agencies may indeed be the answer which in practical terms means cooperation with the agencies of the two other pillars of the international humanitarian system, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and the international and national Nongovernmental Actors. A

formal link exists between the UN system and the Movement in that the IFRC has taken over one specific area as a coordinator. No such formalized relationship exists with the NGO community. Therefore the whole coordination concept is based upon the capacity and willingness of the agencies outside of the UN system to cooperate both with the UN agencies in general, the IFRC in particular. This is indeed the Achilles heel of the whole approach. But, paradoxically enough, it could also be interpreted as its strength as the experience in Yogyakarta revealed.

In order to clarify this potential paradox we need to distinguish between the strategic level and the operative level, the first referring to the global level, the second to the national respectively the field level.

Considerable efforts have been undertaken thus far at the strategic level to clarify what the cluster approach is and how it is supposed to function. As a matter of fact the practitioners in the field do not seem to understand what it is all about and to what extent it differs from the sectoral approach. But this lack of understanding is not limited to the operational level. Some of our interlocutors have suggested to drop the term "cluster" altogether as the term has created more confusion than anything else. In contrast, at the field level there seems to be an awareness and willingness for collective action under the direction of a coordination team providing relevant services (information, data etc.). Those involved in the ESCG were focusing on the perceived necessity to act quickly and efficiently without being concerned too much as to the concept itself. To put it bluntly: the disconnectedness between the strategic level and the operative level has allowed the latter to work efficiently.

The notion of *gaps* which has been at the core of the HRR and the creation of the cluster approach needs to be clarified as well as it implies different things at the different levels. At the strategic level *gaps* are related to the globally available resources (money, personnel, material)[4]. At the operational level *gaps* means the difference between available resources in the field relative to the needs in a given natural disaster.

As a consequence at the strategic level the need for a global mapping of the available resources is required. As far as money is concerned, the UN, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and the NGO community all are dependent on the donors. They are the key actors for filling the gaps. The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative has been created to fill in the overall recognized gaps such as the allocation of funds for the least-funded emergencies. The results are not terribly convincing thus far[5]. The cluster approach is not resolving the propensity of the major donors to fill in existing gaps. As it turned out, some of the agencies had assumed that the cluster approach implies also available funding! As we were told by a UN representative the question is posed as to the use of the CERF which might to some extent resolve the financial issue.

At the national respectively the operational level gaps implies the assessment of needs in a given emergency. Gaps in this case mean the difference between the immediately available resources and the overall resources required. The role of the coordination team is to identify this gap based upon the collection of information from the actors in the field as a first result of their assessment efforts. In addition, as the experience has shown, the ESCG needs some latitude in defining its role which means dropping the sharp distinction between emergency shelter and transitional shelter.

At the global level one could envisage the mapping as a continuous activity where the UN (IASC,OCHA) functions as a kind of service provider. But in order to be useful it needs to be institutionalized (i.e. continuous updating of the data base). At the operative level the issue is how fast the required resources can be mobilized based upon the assessment of the actual needs. In this case this would imply the notion of "gap preparedness" of those agencies willing and capable to provide assistance in terms of emergency shelter. The link between these two levels is to provide an estimate which of the globally available resources could actually be mobilized.

As a member of the IASC the IFRC would participate in the global mapping process as an institutionalized process. In order to fulfil this function of coordination at the strategic level he Federation requires the consent of both the national societies as well as the relevant potential NGO members of the ESCG. Will they be willing to accept this role?

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[4] Louis Michel in his statement to the IASC December 2005 called for "some sorts of Millennium Humanitarian Goals !", that is increased humanitarian funding among others.
[5] see Development Initiatives, Paper D., Report by Development Initiatives on GHD indicators 2004 and 2005, 3 August 2006.

In a next step the IFRC coordination role at the field or operational level implies its capacity to actually convince both the national societies of the Movement as well as the NGOs present to provide the resources needed and to allocate them according to the needs. The latter implies consensus as to how a given area is divided among the agencies present. Will that actually be feasible?

The statement by Egeland that the NGOs have to integrate into the UN cluster system may seem desirable from his perspective yet doomed to failure if persuasion and consensus are absent. The question then is how such a strategy of institutionalizing consensus at the operative level can best be achieved if at all. At present the success of the ESCG as part of the cluster approach has primarily been achieved by the willingness and dedication of the agencies involved in providing assistance to the beneficiaries of the earthquake and the value-added of the leadership of the ESCG. To infer that this success is guaranteed in future natural disasters would be utterly optimistic.

To make the potential for success sustainable the ESCG has to be institutionalized. Institutionalization means that a core group of persons (or groups of persons) needs to be known in advance which are willing to contribute collectively to the envisaged coordination process both within the movement and the NGO community. Continuity is a necessary condition for success, even though this is by no means a sufficient one.

One sufficient condition is the relaxation of the artificial division into emergency shelter and transitional shelter/reconstruction as it does not match with the reality. Given the self-imposed restraint on emergency shelter, one way out of this dilemma that became evident in the Yogyakarta emergency is some arrangement with the Early Recovery Cluster lead so that it participates in the coordination process as early as possible. In fact future members of the Early Recovery Shelter had participated in the ESCG.

OCHA does indeed have an important role to play as a facilitator in specific emergencies. But that needs also some additional thought as to what this means in order to support the cluster leads by avoiding duplication. Again, based on the experience made in Yogyakarta this suggests that the role of the IASC and OCHA in formulating policy guidelines should begin by looking at the realities in the field. Amazingly enough, even though people do not really know what clusters and the new cluster structure really mean they seem to put into practice at least some of the objectives this concept was trying to formulate.

What are the implications for the Federation? According to the ToR this issue should be addressed in the following terms:

- *Issues with regard to visibility for the International Federation.*

- *Examine if there were aspects of the Federation's cluster leadership which potentially might have or actually did compromise the mandate and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.*

The first issue, visibility, is not necessarily as problematic because one can question its relevance. Having decided to take on a coordination role for emergency shelter globally as well as locally in any major natural disasters, the attempt to gain visibility might possibly counterproductive depending on how it is put into practice. If the separation of the operative from the coordinating function is fundamental, the primary objectives of the coordinator are legitimacy and reputation. Legitimacy means that the coordination role is accepted by the major players in the field, reputation implies that all major players recognise the professionalism with which the delegate nominated by the IFRC performs this role.

The basic problem for the IFRC is that by taking over the cluster leadership role it has to satisfy two if not three different communities: the Red Cross/Red Crescent members, the NGOs, and UN agencies as well. This requires consensus first and foremost within the Movement as to its role as a coordinator both at the global and the local level. Is this a sound assumption? Unless there is agreement conflict and division might be the outcome.

The complementary role the IFRC has decided to take on reaches out beyond the Movement. The core issue is therefore whether this will potentially or actually compromise its mandate. In order to fully play its role as coordinator this requires some engagement at the global or strategic level.

Does the Federation have the resources or will the Federation be able to do so? In order to fulfil its coordination function in the field some degree of institutionalisation of its leadership role both with

respect to the national societies as well as the relevant NGOs is necessary. We do not know how feasible this is.

Finally, in terms of the principles the leadership role with in the field requires that those being willing to be coordinated all respect to the field has as a consequence that those included in the ESCG do share the same principles. Is that feasible? In principle this would imply the exclusion of agencies that pursue other objectives than those circumscribed by the Code of Conduct of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement.

8 Summary of Recommendations and Outlook

8.1 Summary of Recommendations

The ToR raise two sets of issues addressed in this subparagraph, those concerning the operation of the ESCG in particular, and those concerning the implications of the ESCG as embedded in a structural setting determined by the United Nations.

In a first step we will focus on the more limited set of issues that are formulated in the ToR in terms of:

b) general questions

- *The experience of the International Federation with respect to the establishment and operation of the ESCG, with a particular emphasis on lessons to be learnt for future operations;*

  and

- *Provide a foundation for establishing policy and guidelines for emergency shelter coordination (cluster) leadership at a national level, including identification of the appropriate mechanisms and procedures to support shelter leadership at the national level within the Secretariat;*

In more specific terms this relates to:

c) specific issues

- *The value of linking and/or separating the ESCG and the IFRC relief operation;*
- *The design and implementation of the exit strategy;*
- *The staffing of the ESCG and the support provided from the Secretariat;*
- *The equipping and funding of the ESCG;*
- *The limitation of the ESCG's activities to those related to emergency shelter rather than transitional shelter;*

The first observation is that the ESCG has been considered as a major success by all those we have talked to. One of the reasons is that besides the fact that the ESCG was set up within a very short time (more or less two days) the separation of the coordination function from the operative role of the IFRC was crucial. This enhanced the credibility of the coordination group reinforced by its "service delivery" function.

At the national level, meaning Yogyakarta that is, one element was missing or neglected, even though this may not fall under the coordination role: the participation of PMI.

For the Secretariat this means in the future to provide first a group of experienced persons able to perform this activity and to foresee ways and means as how to involve PMI in terms of the overall disaster preparedness activities. It seems in general that the high rate of turnover (the leadership changed at least three times within three and a half months) may potentially challenge the success of this kind of operation.

A major problem is the strict limitation of the ESCG to emergency shelter. That division proved to be totally inadequate and disregard the realities in the field.

Turning to the wider concerning the convenor role of the IFRC. Before addressing the issues as formulated in the ToR two short comments concerning the lessons learned as well as the recommendations are formulated first.

To provide recommendations of a more general nature relating to the general issues raised in the ToR is certainly asking too much from the reviewers. We can certainly point to a number of problems that we can identify but we do not feel in a position to go beyond their identification. They touch upon the evaluation of a set of conditions and at the same time they require some basic policy decisions.

There are certainly a number of lessons to be learned from the emergency in Yogyakarta. But these must take into account that the conditions guaranteeing success will very likely not be given in the next disaster. Some of these conditions can be determined by the IFRC others will not. The first general point raised in the ToR reads:

- *Provide recommendations with regard to the International Federation's leadership of future emergency shelter coordination (cluster) activities both at global and at national levels;*

This particular issue relates as well to the topic raised in the more specific list of questions in the ToR:

- *Relations with other clusters and the UN system;*

Given the mandate of the Federation it has two complementary roles as far as coordination is concerned: one within the Movement, the other basically in terms of coordinating the various actors of the three pillars (UN, Movement, NGOs). The UN approach is unproblematic in that it intends to bring greater coherence to humanitarian action, primarily by inclusion of the NGOs. How these two roles can be reconciled needs to be analyzed in greater depth.

One: Prior to such activities a global assessment of the available capacities are required, first within the Movement then within the other two pillars. At the same time this requires the resolution of the question which actors are actually willing to participate in a more or less commonly agreed pre-disaster phase to be coordinated, what their respective capacities are, and what concrete resources they are willing to bring into the coordination process.

Two: Institutionalization means that a core group of persons (or groups of persons) needs to be known in advance which all will contribute collectively to the envisaged coordination process. That continuity is a necessary condition for success, even though no guarantee that it will work.

Three: the artificial division into emergency shelter and transitional shelter/reconstruction, turned out to be unworkable. Given the self-imposed restraint on emergency shelter, one way out of this dilemma that became evident in the Yogyakarta emergency is some arrangement with the early recovery cluster lead so that it participates in the coordination process as early as possible.

Four: based on the experience made, a clarification of what clusters and coordination means is absolutely necessary. There is widespread incomprehension in the field, but not only there, as to what it means. If policy guidelines are formulated, they should be based upon a review of past coordination attempts by the various actors. The concept suggests that it was absent. The review revealed that major actors all see the need for coordination in terms of data collection, unified assessments, and agreement about the geographical areas of activity in order to avoid duplication. This is primarily the role of IASC where the IFRC is present.

Five: OCHA does indeed have an important role to play as a facilitator in specific emergencies. But that needs also some additional thought as to what this means in order to support the cluster leads by avoiding duplication. Again, based on the experience made in Yogyakarta this suggests that the role of the IASC and OCHA in formulating policy guidelines should begin by looking at the realities in the field. Amazingly enough, even though people to not really know what clusters and the new cluster structure really mean they seem to put into practice at least some of the objectives this concept was trying to formulate.

- *Examine if there were aspects of the Federation's cluster leadership which potentially might have or actually did compromise the mandate and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.*
- *Issues with regard to visibility for the International Federation.*

Six: Visibility is a vital issue for any humanitarian actor. Is that really the critical point? After having decided to take on a coordination role for emergency shelter globally, i.e.; in any major disaster where the ERC decides that the cluster approach will be put in place, the attempt to gain visibility might

possibly counterproductive depending on how it is put into practice. If indeed the operative from the coordinating function is fundamental, the primary objectives could rather be legitimacy and reputation. Legitimacy means that the coordination role is accepted by the major players in the field, reputation implies that all major players recognise the professionalism with which the IFRC performs this role.

Seven: The IFRC taking a role that reaches out beyond the Movement in institutional terms (should the convenor role be actually be sustainable) by definition raises the question as to whether this can potentially or actually compromise its mandate. One central aspect relates to the Movement itself: one can hypothesize that the IFRC must have the support of the PNS, in particular the most important ones. Another aspect relates to the difficulties to separate clearly in time emergency shelter from transition shelter and reconstruction. Whereas emergency shelter is clearly humanitarian and less problematic transition shelter falls under the authority of the government. In this case the role of the national Red Cross Societies is important. If they comply as auxiliaries with the government's directives these may not only compromise the principle of independence but also of humanity, possibly impartiality as well.

It may be worthwhile to think as to how coordination in the domain of emergency shelter can be integrated with activities of disaster preparedness in support of national societies.

8.2 Capacity Building (Emergency Shelter Coordination Preparedness)

The review findings reveal that investing in coordination capacities is crucial to be well prepared, thus to effectively coordinate future emergency shelter inventions.

One suggested approach could be to develop an "Emergency Shelter Coordination Preparedness Programme" (ESCPP). Besides providing a framework for a structured capacity building approach, such programme may create a base to apply for funding, and create opportunities to inform relevant emergency shelter actors regarding the existence, function and operative mandate of the ESCG.

Practical suggestions for a capacity building approach are elaborated and presented in the annex VIII (Logframe - Emergency Shelter Coordination Preparedness Programme).

8.3 Conclusion

As mentioned above, the coordination performance by the ESCG has been widely acknowledged and praised by everybody we have interviewed to during the review. From this indicator it may be concluded that the Yogyakarta ERCG achieved its principle objective, namely:

"*Provide leadership to the broader humanitarian community in Emergency Shelter disaster situations, to consolidate best practice, map capacity and gaps, and lead coordinated response".*

However, the success of the ESCG as part of the cluster approach has primarily been achieved by the willingness and dedication of the agencies (read "*individuals"*) involved in providing assistance to the beneficiaries of the earthquake and the value-added of the leadership of the ESCG. To infer that this success is guaranteed in future natural disasters would be utterly optimistic. In other words, the present top-down approach has to be complemented by a bottom-up strategy giving as much leeway as possible to the coordinators in the field, and as much support and guidance from the top.

To draw the final conclusions from all elaborated arguments concerning the sustainability of the role of the IFRC that are compatible with its own mandate it seems clear that the Federation has:

- To invest in coordination capacities;
- Reach consensus both at the strategic level as well as with the agencies at the operative level.
- To determine as to how coordination in the domain of emergency shelter can be integrated with activities of disaster preparedness in support of national societies.

Such a concept supposes though the political decisions to move in the direction of a global lead role in the emergency shelter domain by the Federation, i.e. is this is both desirable and feasible?

20 November 2006

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