WALKING ALONGSIDE
Evaluation of the Canterbury Earthquake Appeal Recovery Programme
Lessons for Practitioners, Agencies and Communities
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Preface

It is a privilege to share with you the findings of the formal and independent evaluation of the New Zealand Red Cross Earthquake Recovery Programme for greater Christchurch.

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge those who have gone before us, those who lost their lives, those who were injured, and those who lost their communities, and places of work, play, learning and living following the earthquake sequence that affected the Canterbury region and beyond, in 2010/2011.

The New Zealand Red Cross programme started after the 7.1 magnitude earthquake in September 2010 and the 6.3 magnitude aftershock six months later, on 22 February 2011. Since then, greater Christchurch has been subject to thousands of aftershocks making the recovery process even more challenging and complex. New Zealand Red Cross will continue to support communities in greater Christchurch through the Canterbury West Coast Service Centre and our network of members in these communities.

We extend our deepest thanks to everyone who supported the Canterbury Earthquake Appeal. The recovery journey will continue in greater Christchurch for many years to come, and a comprehensive evaluation is necessary both to measure the impact of New Zealand Red Cross’ work so far and to allow us all to learn from this experience.

We recognise that these lessons have come at a high cost for many people and communities – personally, socially and economically – which only reinforces how imperative it is not only that New Zealand Red Cross as an organisation learns from what has happened, but also that this knowledge is passed on.

To this end, a suite of three reports, based on the full independent technical evaluation report, has been developed, each of which provides a snapshot of the findings:

1. Evaluation of New Zealand Red Cross Canterbury Earthquake Appeal Recovery Programme – summary report
2. Lessons for practitioners, agencies and communities
3. Executive summary

We also encourage readers to take a few moments to watch some of the real-life stories we have captured (https://www.redcross.org.nz/about-us/here-good/ten-good-stories/), and acknowledge the amazing community members whom it has been our pleasure to walk alongside.
Evaluation context

The Canterbury earthquake sequence

In the early hours of 4 September 2010, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck Darfield, near Christchurch in the South Island of New Zealand. This began a series of aftershocks that would continue for over five years, including a magnitude 6.3 earthquake on 22 February 2011 which killed 185 people and caused widespread damage throughout Christchurch city and surrounding areas.

The complexities that arose from the Canterbury earthquakes were unprecedented. The after-effects have continued to impact communities across Canterbury for many years following the initial crisis.

Residents felt the impacts in two stages:

1. **PRIMARY** – caused directly by the earthquakes
2. **SECONDARY** – indirect by-products of the earthquakes

The impacts can also be viewed through the lens of three groups of needs:

- **created needs** – needs that were a direct result of the earthquakes
- **exacerbated needs** – needs that already existed but were made worse by the earthquakes
- **uncovered needs** – needs that existed in the community but were not previously known to social support agencies or funders.

Discussion of needs in this report is focused on personal impacts and how those have been addressed or alleviated.

Response

In the immediate aftermath, communities needed support with basic needs. The extent to which these needs were met had a significant impact on people’s mental well-being.

Increased levels of stress, anxiety and other psychosocial and mental health issues were widely reported for a sustained period following the earthquakes.

The main immediate needs included:

- first aid and medical services
- food and drinking water
- access to emergency shelter
- wastewater systems
- financial resources
- access to transport
- access to information

Recovery

Residents’ mental and financial well-being was affected by a number of factors in the recovery phase, which covered the time from the restoration of most basic services – around a month after the earthquakes – and was continuing at the time of the evaluation on which this document is based, in February 2017.

Ongoing issues for communities:

- **Loss of employment** – especially in the first six months after the earthquake.
- **Housing issues** – these included a city-wide housing shortage, rising rental prices, problems lodging insurance claims, greater transience and living in damaged homes and/or with damaged possessions.
- **Changes to the educational environment** – parents believed school closures and mergers had a negative impact on educational outcomes and accessibility.
- **The damaged built-environment of the city** – particularly the ongoing rebuild of horizontal infrastructure and the loss of leisure spaces.

The side-effects of the earthquakes affected communities in different ways and to varying degrees. People in the hardest-hit areas of eastern Christchurch and the Port Hills tended to experience the effects of the earthquakes more strongly. Residents on low incomes were more likely to live in neighbourhoods with the greatest amount of damage, meaning that low or single income families and the unemployed often faced the greatest practical and financial hardships. Those who lost jobs or businesses also faced greater financial stress.
Red Cross involvement

Following the 22 February 2011 earthquake, New Zealand Red Cross and local territorial authorities launched the 2011 Canterbury Earthquake Appeal. This appeal raised more than $103 million – including interest – in donations from the New Zealand public. It was the largest New Zealand Red Cross appeal since the Second World War.

Supplemented by contributions from international Red Cross societies and corporate donations, the appeal led to the establishment and implementation of the 2011 Canterbury Earthquake Appeal Recovery Programme (CEARP).

This included three types of activity:

1. Cash grants for individuals, families and schools.
2. Recovery programmes delivered by Red Cross in greater Christchurch.
3. Joint ventures/partnerships with other organisations to deliver recovery programmes.

The term ‘greater Christchurch’ is used throughout this report to refer to the three territorial authorities: Selwyn and Waimakariri Districts and Christchurch City. This combined area is where Red Cross focused its recovery support, guided first by essential community needs and then moving towards sustainable solutions to enhance recovery.
Full evaluation of the Red Cross recovery programme

How the research was conducted

An independent research company, Research First Limited, was contracted to conduct a comprehensive impact evaluation of the Canterbury Earthquake Appeal Recovery Programme.

That evaluation involved a seven-stage, mixed-method data collection process and was conducted between September 2016 and February 2017. Its approach combined qualitative and quantitative research, aiming to combine population-wide perception data with carefully targeted evaluation insights from a variety of stakeholder groups involved with Red Cross.

Participants were recruited from greater Christchurch specifically, so caution should be used in generalising the findings to the wider Canterbury region.

**STAGES OF EVALUATION**

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<td>2 workshops with New Zealand Red Cross staff and alumni</td>
<td>Systematic review</td>
<td>8 focus groups with service providers and partners</td>
<td>71 in home interviews with recipients</td>
<td>15 community focus groups</td>
<td>CAPI and CATI survey (n=3,048)</td>
<td>Workshop with New Zealand Red Cross staff</td>
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This document also reflects other evaluative work commissioned by Red Cross, including an evaluation of the Bereaved and Seriously Injured Programme conducted in February 2016.

For that evaluation, semi-structured interviews were conducted with bereaved support programme participants, seriously injured support programme participants, current and past Red Cross staff and one board member. Red Cross organised programme participant interviewees through an expression of interest process among email recipients.

**Caveats and limitations**

A number of complexities were considered in the design of the evaluation, which also serve to outline the limitations of the evaluation. These include:

- the wide range of activities involved, with differing timescales, audiences and purposes
- many Red Cross-supported activities were delivered by other agencies
- time elapsed between earthquakes and evaluation may affect recollections
- a number of affected people now reside outside greater Christchurch
- the number of other contributions to the recovery complicate attribution
- the number of staff involved in implementation who are no longer available

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2 ‘Computer Assisted Personal Interview’ and ‘Computer Assisted Telephone Interview’.
What did Red Cross do and what was the impact?

Key findings

Red Cross had a wide impact
The recovery programme had a widely experienced and deeply felt impact on the well-being of greater Christchurch residents.
In a survey of 3,048 people, approximately one in five (22%) of greater Christchurch residents received Red Cross support, with the majority receiving more than one kind of support.

Benefits beyond practical support
In addition to the direct assistance provided, Red Cross activities also had important indirect benefits for residents.
These indirect benefits resulted from:
- the perception that Red Cross brought expertise to the response and recovery
- validation of residents’ needs through the provision of cash grants
- empathy from Red Cross staff
- the sense of care provided through outreach and door-knocking

Adaptability
The success of the Red Cross recovery programme is remarkable because the organisation was very much learning as it went.
The scale of the Canterbury earthquakes, an initial lack of experience in local recovery, the overwhelming response to the Earthquake Appeal and a congested landscape of competing agencies meant that Red Cross was operating in an environment of considerable uncertainty.

Effective and fair
Red Cross assistance was seen as helpful, effective and fair, both by those assisted and by people in greater Christchurch in general.
One in five of those who received support (18%) felt that Red Cross had more impact on their recovery than their friends and family, while 70% of people felt that Red Cross had at least as much impact as their friends and family. These are important statistics when contrasted with data that shows 91% of local residents would turn to family in times of need, and 66% would turn to friends.

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HOW RESIDENTS RATED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RED CROSS SUPPORT

Of residents who received assistance from New Zealand Red Cross:

- Thought it was helpful or very helpful: 90%
- Thought it was effective or very effective: 91%
- Thought it had at least as much impact as assistance provided by their friends or family: 70%

Of residents who were aware that New Zealand Red Cross provided assistance:

- Thought it was helpful or very helpful: 88%
- Thought it was effective or very effective: 85%
- Thought it was fair or very fair: 85%

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF RED CROSS

- Agree or strongly agree Red Cross had a positive impact on the community: 86%
- Agree or strongly agree that CEARP made them think more positively about Red Cross: 66%
- Agree or strongly agree that CEARP made them more likely to donate to Red Cross: 58%
Successes and lessons: Considerations for the future

1 Be visible in affected communities

KEY LESSON

Consider how organisations involved in recovery can use visibility as a community support mechanism, especially if few community-focused organisations are present. Ensure activities highlight what the organisation is doing in the community and how it is helping.

High presence of Red Cross staff and volunteers

A key success of the recovery programme was the visibility of Red Cross in affected communities. Evaluation results show that the profile of Red Cross in the earthquake response and recovery was significantly higher than any other organisation.

One quarter of survey respondents mentioned Red Cross first when asked which organisations helped the greater Christchurch community with response and recovery. Total unprompted awareness was 41% – 16 percentage points higher than the next most-recognised organisation. Total recall of Red Cross involvement was 83%.

Benefits for communities

- **Reassurance** – Nearly all residents believed that ‘Red Cross is an organisation with significant disaster expertise, and international capacity for intervening in disaster situations’. Residents felt that Red Cross presence meant response and recovery activities were being conducted ‘as they should be’.

- **Care and concern** – Some residents felt ‘uncared for’ or ignored by other organisations involved in recovery, especially central government organisations. In contrast, Red Cross was seen as making a positive difference to the welfare and well-being of residents.

- **Connection** – Residents were comforted that ‘someone’ was actively working to address needs in the city, especially through door-knocking. Knowing that Red Cross was supporting affected residents allowed others to focus on their own well-being.

Positive perceptions

The recovery programme had a significant, positive impact on residents’ perceptions of New Zealand Red Cross. This is the result of taking a role in the response and recovery, and belief that the administration of the recovery programme was fair and effective.

The evaluation found that the majority of greater Christchurch residents had a positive impression of Red Cross (84% mildly or strongly positive), and very few had a negative perception of the organisation (just 1%). Similarly, 86% of greater Christchurch residents agreed that Red Cross had a positive impact in the community. Only 1% disagreed.
Use cash grants to support pressing needs

KEY LESSON

Consider the use of cash grants to meet immediate post-disaster needs. Consider also utilising a cash transfer programme in later stages of recovery to target and meet more specific needs that arise as the environment changes. Consider establishing an independent commission to govern the cash grants programme.

The Red Cross Cash Transfer Programme

The largest programme of support provided by Red Cross in greater Christchurch was cash transfers, also referred to as cash grants. This type of support was the most frequently accessed by residents of greater Christchurch (70% overall).

Red Cross created the New Zealand Red Cross Independent Earthquake Commission to govern the cash transfer programme and ensure distribution was planned, accountable and respected by local networks.

Overall, grant provision had significant impacts:

- **Financial assistance** – Because the support provided by people's family or friends was rarely financial, cash transfers relieved the stress of facing unanticipated financial burdens.
- **Financial resilience** – The availability of cash transfers meant that Red Cross was seen as empathetic to the plight of residents. People said they felt their needs were being recognised and validated. For some people, this validation was an important first step toward psychosocial well-being.
- **Self-identified financial needs** – Residents appreciated being able to spend cash transfer money on what they needed most. This approach supported individuals' sense of what was right for them, by allowing them to identify their own needs and respond appropriately. Giving people cash also demonstrated trust and gave people a sense of control and empowerment in uncertain times.

Particular strengths of the Cash Transfer Programme included:

- **Simple application process** – The ease of the application process and speed of payment validated people's decisions to apply for a grant. This meant that people in the early stages acted as promoters for grants and widened their reach.
- **Non-judgemental approach** – People described the Red Cross staff in charge of administering the grants as empathetic and non-judgemental. Some vulnerable residents said they were pleasantly surprised by how well they were treated.
- **On the ground connections** – The Commission's structural connections to local authorities and sources of information meant that even when decision-making was not based on fully rigorous needs assessment, it still supported the provision of financial support to the most affected residents and communities.
3 Engage in door-knocking and outreach

**KEY LESSON**

If appropriate, consider implementing a large-scale door-knocking programme in affected communities. Door-knocking and outreach are effective means to provide psychosocial support, identify other needs and distribute tangible support items. Door-knocking and on-street presence is also an important component of visibility (Lesson One). Ensure partnerships are in place so that efforts are not duplicated and communities are well covered.

Red Cross door-knocked more than 16,000 homes in greater Christchurch and this was identified as a key factor in the success of the recovery programme. Outreach visits and door-knocking provided significant psychosocial support to residents. Being contacted by Red Cross helped residents to feel less isolated.

While in most cases residents hadn’t actively looked for support from Red Cross, they appreciated the fact that it was being offered. Door-knocking and outreach also provided an opportunity for Red Cross to distribute physical resources and create further support networks where they were needed.

4 Support bereaved and seriously injured in multiple ways

**KEY LESSON**

Consider making grants available to bereaved families and the seriously injured to assist with urgent financial needs. Offer support groups, retreats and social activities as a way for people to connect with others in similar situations. Engage experts to provide talks about post-disaster grief and stress. Ensure support availability is communicated clearly across a wide range of channels. Develop relationships with key health providers in order to reach seriously injured people quickly.

The Red Cross Bereaved and Seriously Injured Programme included a support group, retreats, talks and DVDs by Dr Rob Gordon (a psychologist with considerable experience in disaster-related grief and trauma), and a range of other social activities.

In general, people greatly appreciated the programme. Relationships with key health providers were essential to the programme’s success and Burwood Hospital in Christchurch jointly organised support for the seriously injured with Red Cross.

Four retreat weekends were held to provide an opportunity for people to connect and have fun together. These were a highlight for families supported by Red Cross.
5 Provide tangible help through physical items

**KEY LESSON**

Consider distribution of physical items as part of recovery activities. Appropriate items may include those supporting disaster preparedness, connectivity, and health (e.g. Winter Warmer Packs).

Physical items such as Winter Warmer Packs and torch radios were more effective than grants in some cases. They were seen as being more accessible to some residents because no visible application process was necessary. The provision of tangible support reinforced residents’ sense of being cared for. It also empowered partner agencies to provide instant support.

For larger scale item distribution programmes, dedicated logistics personnel to oversee storage, transport, tracking and accounting for items is beneficial.

6 Partner with other community support organisations

**KEY LESSON**

Work together with community groups who have permanent ties to affected populations. This will help with needs analysis and ensure activities and interventions are appropriate and not duplicated. Partnerships are an effective way of harnessing specialist expertise where a recovery organisation may have no prior experience.

Partnerships were an effective way for Red Cross to provide targeted assistance to residents with higher needs. Collaborating with local non-government organisations and community organisations also gave Red Cross greater insight into residents’ needs and how they could be best supported.
Collaborate with local schools to support children

**KEY LESSON**

Empower schools to support students and caregivers through funding and other resourcing. Schools may also serve as community hubs and information distribution networks.

Support for and at schools was another success for Red Cross. Teachers and other school staff reported that the Schoolchildren’s Grant financially supported them to provide positive experiences for children. Experiences like swimming lessons, kapa haka classes and school camps had a flow-on effect, helping children have fun and improve their confidence in a time of high-stress. Schools were also an important channel, connecting Red Cross to needy or vulnerable populations through partnerships like Social Workers in Schools.
Inspire confidence and trust through strong guiding principles

**KEY LESSON**

Promote trust and confidence in recovery actions through a clear charter and guiding principles. Independence, impartiality and neutrality are especially important where communities lack trust in some official recovery efforts.

The seven Fundamental Principles of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement provided staff, members and residents with a strong guide for the intentions of the recovery programme. People surveyed perceived Red Cross’ commitment to these principles as being the basis of the brand. This, alongside independence from other organisations operating in the recovery, created a strong foundation of trust. Most residents believed they would be dealt with fairly and impartially. A reliance on voluntary service reinforced the reputation of Red Cross for doing good and reassured the people of greater Christchurch that donations would be channelled directly to where they were needed most.

**Fundamental Principles**

**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 continue 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 one 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.
9 Define and clearly communicate your role

**KEY LESSON**

Clearly define organisational roles and intent, and provide structure for expectations. The research is clear that perceptions of recovery activities are influenced by both brand and activity.

Define what is and what is not the role of your organisation.

Residents and community leaders were confused about the role Red Cross plays in local disaster recovery. This is because:

- While Red Cross was well known, people knew little about our pre-earthquake local activity.
- Residents usually only see ‘Red Cross’ in emergency relief situations.
- No other organisations ‘owned’ the social recovery process.
- While a range of organisations offered limited assistance, Red Cross provided the widest range of support, by a significant margin.
- Red Cross did not actively communicate its role in continuing to support recovery.

This confusion created risk for Red Cross. The lack of definition about its role, combined with social service funding, has the potential to complicate the brand and core business of Red Cross.

10 Establish and utilise a whole-of-programme strategy

**KEY LESSON**

Plan how funds will be used across an entire recovery programme, while making sure there is flexibility in later stages to respond to unanticipated needs. This approach ensures better links between response and recovery, and encourages timely interventions. Recovery activities will be more effective where they are considered as part of an integrated programme.

Red Cross was unsure of the eventual scope of the appeal fund in the response and early stages of recovery, which meant a whole-of-fund strategy wasn’t put in place until four months after the earthquake. Response and recovery activities were compartmentalised, meaning opportunities to engage beneficiaries with the recovery programme were missed. This delay in planning also meant later interventions were less timely than the delivery of cash grants.

While Red Cross had developed a recovery framework to help internal stakeholders, it was not a concise summary of the organisation’s role and did not provide clear guidance. In particular, the document did not facilitate direct connections between recovery programme intent and intervention.
Build on existing areas of organisational expertise

**KEY LESSON**

Focus on recovery efforts that build on areas of expertise. Partner with other specialist organisations to ensure activities are conducted effectively and are sustainable in the long-term. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to advise on or fund a partnership programme, rather than conduct it in-house.

Research shows that programmes delivered directly by Red Cross were of variable value. Activities utilising Red Cross members were the most effective of the programmes delivered directly by Red Cross. These programmes built on the organisation’s existing strengths and core businesses, while avoiding areas where Red Cross lacked experience.

Participants in the evaluation were less positive about programmes that were seen as ‘not fitting’ for Red Cross. This is because:

- Participants questioned whether it was appropriate for Red Cross to deliver some programmes.
- Some programmes were seen as a move away from business-as-usual services, with the potential to detract from Red Cross core business.
- Red Cross was perceived as trying to shift into some areas where it had no subject-matter expertise, rather than collaborating with organisations that did.

Locally manage recovery while ensuring strong links to organisation governance

**KEY LESSON**

Base recovery management locally to gain effectiveness from local perspectives and understanding. Internal communications should support links between head offices and affected regional branches, and ensure regions are appropriately supported.

Research identified a disconnect in understanding between the Christchurch-based recovery team, non-recovery staff and staff in the Wellington National Office. This disconnect may have resulted in gaps in the provision of Red Cross assistance. Stakeholders reported that National Office approval of grants did not always align with perceived need on the ground. Similarly, some stakeholders were concerned that Red Cross was ‘too corporate’ as an organisation to effectively manage recovery activities at a community level. This affected stakeholder perceptions of the effectiveness and relevance of Red Cross.
Implement early and ongoing planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting practices

**KEY LESSON**

Implement robust data gathering and monitoring practices as soon as possible, taking professional advice where necessary. Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) should be systematic, timely and actionable. Ensure that needs assessment is integrated into recovery planning and that data quality is consistent. Aim to measure both impact and outcomes.

It is internationally accepted that ongoing monitoring of recovery interventions is best-practice for measuring impact and value. This is especially important when interventions are being provided for the first time, as many were in this recovery programme.

Research shows some areas where Red Cross PMER systems were inadequate:

- Early on there was a lack of internal understanding and support for monitoring and evaluation.
- While detailed and comprehensive partnership documents were templated, many final contracts lacked detail, making it difficult to understand the rationale behind partnerships and whether risks had been accurately scoped.
- Inconsistent reporting requirements for partners. High turnover in the recovery team meant relationships with some service providers were disrupted and reporting requirements were seen as open to interpretation.

Build pre-existing relationships to improve partnership effectiveness

**KEY LESSON**

Identify and engage with existing community stakeholders before disasters happen. Partnerships can also be effective when advice-based rather than funding-based. Ensure funding-based relationships have considered exit strategies that support programme sustainability.

Partnering with other organisations broadened the positive impact of Red Cross’ recovery programme by connecting Red Cross assistance to a greater range of people and providing more targeted support for residents who needed it. There is considerable evidence that community organisations have made a significant, positive impact in the earthquake response and recovery.
However, the evaluation highlighted issues with the way Red Cross worked with other organisations:

- While Red Cross began the recovery programme with good brand awareness and positive brand perceptions, there were many links but few deep relationships with local stakeholders in the non-government or community support sector.
- Non-government organisations and community organisations in greater Christchurch were already well networked. These networks allowed organisations to call on each other for support and help each other reach vulnerable groups of residents. The lack of early relationships meant Red Cross failed to capitalise on the complementary activities of other organisations.
- Partners and service providers had difficulty in maintaining relationships with Red Cross when there were changes in the recovery team staff.
- Some community organisations reported that in the response and early stages of recovery, Red Cross did not seem willing to engage or understand their perspective, although this changed as the recovery progressed.
- Communities expressed a wish to extend their work with Red Cross. The general perception was that funding ceased while the needs partner organisations were meeting continued to impact residents.

15 Assess needs and vulnerability using additional means

**KEY LESSON**

Understand vulnerability in communities beyond demographics. Keep definitions of vulnerability clear but flexible. Consider using social capital and ontological security to identify and meet the needs of vulnerable communities. In particular, consider using social capital as a lens to understand social isolation and vulnerability, and connect residents to available networks or support services.

While the recovery programme had a distinct focus on supporting the vulnerable, it was not clear who was considered vulnerable. The evaluation uncovered a wide range of determinants for vulnerability, primarily focusing on demographic characteristics such as age, income, ethnicity and household composition. While these criteria were broadly useful, they did not allow for precise targeting and would exclude some affected residents.
There are two sociological concepts that provide useful guidance on identifying and supporting vulnerable communities. These are:

- **Social capital** – Social capital in this context is understood as the networks individuals develop which they can use to get what they need. Residents with low social capital are more likely to need external support during recovery. People considered vulnerable post-earthquakes were also often considered socially isolated, because they lacked the level of support most residents gained from their informal social networks, including family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. These networks provided significant practical and well-being-related support after the earthquakes – particularly in the response stage – as groups of people banded together to collectively address need.

- **Ontological security** – Ontological security is an important component in psychosocial well-being. Of particular interest in this context is the relationship between housing and the concept of ontological security, understood as the sense of security an individual derives from continuity in their identity, surroundings and material environment. Housing, while supporting a variety of financial and basic needs, also has a significant role to play in supporting non-financial needs after a disaster.

**KEY LESSON**

Work closely with partner organisations to achieve impact among minority and at-risk groups. Investigate other channels for connecting with minority and at-risk communities. Ensure recovery practices and interventions are culturally sensitive.

Red Cross successfully provided support to most higher-need population groups and the communities that experienced the greatest direct impacts of the earthquakes. The evaluation shows there are some ways Red Cross could have improved support for minority and at-risk groups, particularly residents aged over 75, pre-school aged children, and Pasifika and Asian peoples.

- Red Cross was seen as most effective where they worked with iwi, marae, and existing Māori support organisations. Red Cross could work to develop better direct relationships with service providers, while maintaining an approach where Māori organisations take a leadership and coordination role.

- Evaluation shows that Asian and Pasifika people were less likely to have been assisted by Red Cross (11% and 12% respectively). While the breadth of support provided to Māori is comparatively and appropriately high, there may have been gaps in the provision of support to Asian and Pasifika peoples.
Red Cross made deliberate and specific efforts to support culturally and linguistically diverse communities during the recovery. However, a few respondents felt that Red Cross staff and members lacked appropriate cultural practices, impacting how they dealt with and supported residents belonging to cultural minorities.

Residents aged over 75 were less likely to have received support from Red Cross than the overall assistance rate (12% compared to 22%). This suggests Red Cross struggled to effectively support older people. This is a key gap in the recovery programme, given that the qualitative evidence suggests that this group is more likely to have been socially isolated and therefore in need of formal support. There is some evidence that partnership approaches better supported older people; residents aged over 65 were most likely to have experienced door-knocking or outreach. The evaluation suggests that much of this gap is due to attitudinal and communication barriers, rather than a lack of relevant interventions and activities for older people.

Investigation into effective programmes for pre-school aged children is needed. Some stakeholders felt that support for pre-school children – similar to that provided to schoolchildren – would have addressed further need.

17 Inform and advocate

Support community recovery practices by supplying advice and distributing information on topics such as best-practice recovery interventions. Consider strong advocacy on behalf of the community, which may also strengthen links to community workers and contribute to local relevance.

Participants did not think of Red Cross as an advocate for the community in the wider recovery, although they did think it was well-placed to undertake advocacy. While advocacy was an objective for Red Cross, there was little evidence of this in practice. This may be because Red Cross chose to practice confidential advocacy.

The evaluation found that impartial advocacy on behalf of the community was a gap in the greater Christchurch recovery. Fulfilling this role would be an opportunity to develop stronger community links and a better local purpose in recovery.

Conclusion

Red Cross has a long and proud history of supporting New Zealanders to get through disasters. The Canterbury earthquakes showed that people highly value Red Cross’ presence in a post-crisis environment. The organisation’s visibility in the community had a positive impact on people’s well-being. Guided by the Fundamental Principles, Red Cross was able to provide support where it was most needed through cash grants, the distribution of items, and programmes run through partnerships and in collaboration with schools.

While the perception of Red Cross’ role in the recovery is overwhelmingly positive, lessons learned through the evaluation can be used to do more good. Clarifying the organisation’s role and building on existing strengths will enable Red Cross to make more of an impact alongside other organisations in the future. Implementing sound planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting and a whole-of-programme approach in future recovery situations will ensure Red Cross is good and ready to help, no matter what the future brings.

This summary report has been provided in the hope that other organisations will benefit from these lessons, so that communities across the globe can recover more quickly and become more resilient following a disaster.