



AHA Centre Emerges as Regional Leader in Disaster Relief

In 2011, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) launched the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) in Indonesia's capital city of Jakarta, with the purpose of building the region's shared capacity to manage natural disaster responses.

With assistance from USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), member states, and other donors, the AHA Centre has developed into the key regional leader on natural disaster monitoring and humanitarian relief coordination. To date, the AHA Centre has activated responses for more than 30 natural disasters in Southeast Asia, including earthquakes, flooding, landslides, tsunamis, and typhoons, in coordination with national disaster management agencies. In response to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, for example, the AHA Centre coordinated the deployment of emergency responders, logisticians, and medical personnel to assist affected communities in the Philippines. Five years later, during the September 2018 earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia's Central Sulawesi Province, the Government of Indonesia relied on the AHA Centre to manage the entire flow of international assistance into the country.

The AHA Centre has trained 320 first responders across the region through its Emergency Response and Assessment Team



Photo by Christine Colburn/USAID

(ERAT) program. ERAT participants complete 100 hours of specialized coursework and then mobilize to respond to disasters as teams of 8 to 10 people. The AHA Centre has also enhanced emergency logistics preparedness in the region by pre-positioning relief commodities in Malaysia, with plans to stockpile additional commodities in the Philippines and Thailand for more extensive coverage and improved response efficiency.

With dedicated funding from USAID/OFDA, the AHA Centre has also developed comprehensive disaster monitoring platforms in partnership with the Pacific Disaster Center; a state-of-the-art emergency operations center from which teams coordinate response efforts; and a range of thorough information products to brief government, humanitarian, and public stakeholders on urgent disaster and response updates.

The AHA Centre remains prepared to serve member states based on humanitarian need, with its efforts and successes underscoring the importance of locally and regionally led disaster response.