Irish Humanitarian Aid to India, Nepal & Brazil, 2021 - HSE perspective

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Director
Global Health Programme, HSE
21st October 2021
HSE engagement in health at a global level

1. HSE mandate
• To provide health and social care services for the population of Ireland

2. Ireland’s international commitments
• Ireland has committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
• The HSE is a partner in the Government’s International Development Policy

3. Shared solutions for shared problems
• The HSE needs to work with other countries on health issues – pandemics, migration, climate change, etc.
Engagement underpinned by MoU with Dept. Foreign Affairs

Memorandum of Understanding
In Support of Better Health for the Developing World

Collaboration to enhance Ireland’s contribution to
Global Health and Development

between

Irish Aid and the Health Service Executive

2017 – 2020

March 2017
EQUALS Initiative – HSE donating equipment to Africa since 2014

Collaboration:

- Health Service Executive
- Royal College of Physicians of Ireland
- Ministry for Health, Zambia
- Zambian College of Medicine and Surgery

Goals

- Sourcing and donating good quality equipment which becomes available from Irish hospitals to hospitals in Zambia, in response to local need
- Supporting the training of biomedical engineers
- Developing postgraduate medical training
HSE has built experience in equipment donation and support

- Focus on collection, storage and shipping of reusable medical devices to Zambia
- Links with Ministry of Health and Medical Stores to identify priority equipment and needs
- Medical equipment collected, assessed and prepared for shipping in a HSE facility
- Devices functionality and safety checked and equipment packed by clinical engineers
- Biomedical engineering workshops in Zambia
- Donation of toolkits to aid with repairs and maintenance
HSE has acted in global solidarity since start of pandemic

"None of us are safe until all of us are safe"
HSE contributes to global equity in COVID response

Unless we have equal opportunities all over the globe, controlling this pandemic is going to be very difficult. 

Dr Nahed Seddiq, Bahrain

- Health inequities are symptomatic of broader socio-economic inequality and failures in global governance for health
- COVID-19 pandemic exposed the existing global health inequities, within and between countries
- Addressing inequity should be at the heart of effective global response at this stage in the pandemic

“While some people may need a third shot for health reasons, giving boosters to the healthy was akin to giving two life jackets to some people on the Titanic.”

www.worldmapper.org
First donation to India following media coverage

- Started Friday evening, 23rd April
- Realisation that HSE had equipment which it could donate
- Leadership support to proceed
- Started process Friday night – ‘Could DFA help with transportation?’
It was all about multiagency collaboration
24 April
• Coordination begins with HSE and DFA (Saturday PM)
• Direct charter flight identified as best option

25 April
• Irish offer confirmed at ERCC coordination meeting
• Offer and Part A Transport Grant application on CECIS

27/28 April
• Charter flight lands in Dublin
• Cargo loading overnight
• Plane departs Dublin Airport

29 April
• Irish Humanitarian Aid lands in New Delhi
• Distributed to various Hospitals

ISSUES:
- Late addition of extra insurance by Transport Broker
- ERCC overwhelmed, asked Ireland to communicate directly with Broker (First time this had been asked of any MS)
- Required Customs documentation, Gift Letter, Commercial invoice, Landing permits
- Technical issues with Antonov II-76 in Russia
TIMELINE - 2nd Humanitarian Aid Flight

26 April
- Additional Aid identified by HSE
- Likely cargo would require much larger plane
- ERCC stretched beyond capacity
- Work began directly with transport provider on planning 2nd flight

26 - 28 April
- New Irish offers confirmed at ERCC coordination meeting
- Offer and Part A Transport Grant application on CECIS

03 May
- Charter flight lands in Dublin
- Cargo loading overnight
- Plane departs Dublin Airport

04 May
- Irish Humanitarian Aid lands in New Delhi
- Distributed to various Hospitals

Email 06 May with details of distribution of equipment

ISSUES:
- Late withdrawal of freight loading partner
- Local lifting and delivery of cargo
- Technical specs documentation, Safety certs
- Fitting cargo on 747, could ventilators be stacked?
- Media Visibility requirement for 75% UCPM co-financing

Identified broader range of equipment
Nepal Humanitarian Aid Donation – 16th June 2021

- 65 Oxygen Concentrators
- 5 Ventilators
- 400 Oximeters
- 50 Respiratory Monitors
- 50 Defibrillators
- 100 Thermometers
- 728 Oxygen Regulators
- 398 Air Regulators
- 2 Anaesthetic Machines
- 18 ICU Monitors
- 30 Infusion Pumps
- 56 Ventilation Circuits
- 4 Patient Trolleys
- 99,750 PPE

- Followed HSE cyber attack
- Unofficial communications were very helpful
- Also received NGO donations
Brazil Humanitarian Aid Donation – 25th June 2021

- 47,520 Vials of ATRACURIUM delivered by temperature controlled container to Sao Paulo, which have the potential to save 55,000 lives in Brazil.

- Procedurally challenging
- Logistics complex
Key Lessons

• Coordination worked well in practice, thanks to collective will and commitment
• Existing programmes and relationships were key
• Identified lack of formal coordination mechanism
Further requests for COVID assistance since June 2021

- Under EU Mechanism (CECIS)
  - Romania (Oct)
  - Tajikistan (Oct)
- Through Dept of Foreign Affairs
  - Peru (June)
  - Sierra Leone (Aug)
- Through Dept of Health
  - Uganda (donated AZ vaccines in Sept)
- Through HSE connections
  - Zambia (donated PPE in Oct)
  - Tanzania (Sept)
  - Sudan (July)