

Company Name:

bioMérieux

Title of the Example:

Actions to support and protect access to healthcare in Southeast Asia in the aftermath of the tsunami.

Global Compact Principal:

Principal #1

Actions:

bioMérieux, in partnership with the Mérieux Foundation* and in conjunction with international organizations, pursued actions to support public health facilities seriously damaged by the tsunami of December 26, 2004.

bioMérieux's involvement took several forms: an assessment mission led by a bioMérieux expert, the active participation of the company's Jakarta office in post-tsunami relief efforts (donations of reagents, increased technical support for the region), as well as financial support.

The assessment mission was conducted in Aceh province, particularly hard hit by the earthquake and the tsunami because of its close proximity to the epicenter. This province is also the most isolated after more than 30 years of armed conflict.

This mission, carried out by a bioMérieux employee over a period of several weeks, was supported by the company's Jakarta team and conducted in partnership with CAM** and the WHO's Lyon office for Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response (EPR).

The purpose of the mission was to determine the needs of the different laboratories in the region, to develop an action plan to rebuild and strengthen clinical biology activities, and to put this plan into effect.

The bioMérieux expert met with local representatives from WHO and Doctors Without Borders, hospital managers and the head of the Medical Academy responsible for training laboratory technicians. She visited several medical facilities: provincial hospital laboratories, a district hospital and some 15 public health centers (puskesmas) on both the east and west coasts. She also met with laboratory equipment and diagnostic reagent suppliers in order to determine supply possibilities with them.

Several sites were selected to receive assistance on the basis of needs expressed by the public health workers and provided that similar actions had not already been planned for these sites. The selected sites included six puskesmas and two district hospitals under the supervision of the Indonesian Ministry of Health. The two hospitals are located in Bireuen and Sigli. The puskesmas are located on the east coast in the districts of Bireuen and Pidie (Jangka, Samalanga, Jeunieb, Simpang, Mamplam, Bandar Baru), with the exception of one puskesmas that is located on the west coast in the hard-to-reach village of Patek in the Aceh Jaya province.

The proposed action plan comprised equipping these laboratories with essential material (centrifuges, hemacytometers, dyes, etc.) and providing technical training on how to use the equipment and carry out basic medical tests, a very important consideration since the tsunami casualties resulted in an extensive loss of expertise.

Results:

Thanks to the action plan and the support of bioMérieux and the Mérieux Foundation, laboratories were provided with the equipment necessary to carry out essential diagnostic tests, particularly for malaria and tuberculosis, as well as blood tests. Through training, the skills of laboratory technicians were enhanced and the level of healthcare services provided to local populations was improved.

The resumption of activities made it possible to meet public health needs on the west coast, which was hard hit by the tsunami. The puskesmas laboratory, which was rebuilt on this very isolated coast, cut off from the main road network, was able to open, whereas the puskesmas on the east coast were able to resume their activities. As for the district hospitals, these actions were a welcome addition to those of other NGOs and of the Ministry of Health.

The proposed actions were carried out on schedule thanks to CAM, in conjunction with a representative from bioMérieux Jakarta. After the equipment for each site was installed, the local staff received technical and biomedical training.

A Laboratory Technician Officer was designated to train the new teams. He works under the supervision of a medical coordinator based in the village of Patek. His mission is to provide assistance to local laboratories and to train their teams in the use and maintenance of the equipment.

** French government-approved non-profit organization in the common public interest.*

*** The Comité d'Aide Médicale is a not-for profit international humanitarian NGO whose mission is to support communities affected by conflict, natural disasters and epidemics. CAM develops its programs in partnership with local communities and prioritizes the strengthening of local community capacity. The goal of CAM's work is to support communities to move from crisis to development. As a medical NGO, CAM's expertise and core business is structured around three main program areas:*

- Primary health care programs including mobile and fixed medical clinics.*
- Environment health programs such as water and sanitation programs and community education on the transmission of disease.*
- Mental health programs such as psychosocial projects which support communities and individuals traumatized by the effects of conflict or loss.*

Countries affected:

Indonesia, Aceh Province, northern Sumatra

Key words describing the example:

bioMérieux, Mérieux Foundation, tsunami, medical analyses laboratories, rehabilitation, training

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