

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

MYANMAR

16 June 2005

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In Brief

Appeal No. 05AA055; Programme Update no. 1, Period covered: 01 January to 31 March, 2005; Appeal coverage: 66.9%; Outstanding needs: CHF 494,488 (USD 396,956 or EUR 320,264).

[Click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List \(also available on the website\).](#)

Appeal target: CHF 1,494,811 (USD 1,245,157 or EUR 977,320)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Southeast Asia regional appeal 05AA057, Tsunami Emergency & Recovery Plan of Action 2005-2010 (28/04)

Programme summary:

The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) continued to implement activities in the areas of health and care, disaster management, humanitarian values and organizational development under a new leadership. The tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004 generated much international interest, challenging the national society's capacity for appropriate response while maintaining its ongoing annual programmes. Nevertheless, its subsequent operations served to increase the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's visibility in the country, prompting positive responses from the donor community. Owing to funds carried over from the previous year, the overall programme has not faced any major constraints.

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This Programme Update reflects activities to be implemented over a one-year period. This forms part of, and is based on, longer-term, multi-year planning (refer below to access the detailed logframe documents). All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Operational developments

The overall political and socio-economic situation of Myanmar changed little during the first months of the year, and the living conditions for the largest part of the population continued to be difficult and in some areas, precarious. The exchange rate of the Kyat against the dollar remained fairly constant, but market prices continued to rise. The reconvening of the national convention went ahead as planned in February/March although not all parties who were invited to send delegations participated, raising once again the validity of the convention in the eyes of some observers.

The MRCS general assembly in January saw the appointment of a new national president and some changes in the executive board, which took effect from 1 February. The president took up the new challenges with enthusiasm and confidence and recognized the important role of the Federation and ICRC delegations in supporting the further development of the national society.

To a greater or lesser extent, all information and ongoing actions of the government and humanitarian organizations during the first quarter of 2005 were overshadowed by the impact of and the response to the earthquake and subsequent tsunami of 26 December 2004. The MRCS, with support from the Federation, and in the early stages from the ICRC delegation, worked steadily and effectively to ensure an appropriate response to the disaster, and to ensure that the subsequent five-year appeal addressed not only disaster response but the broadest capacity building and programme development issues presently of concern for the society. The overall visibility and credibility of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in Myanmar were increased through this operation, and the Federation's leading role in the coordination of international relief was appreciated, setting a new scene for greater donor support to the MRCS largely through the Federation. In March, the Federation's head of delegation attended the Hong Kong Tsunami Forum together with the head of the MRCS disaster management division and presented an overview of the effects of the disaster, the action taken and the five-year plan. Initial response by donors to the Myanmar section of the Federation's overall appeal has been very positive.

In addition to the extra work and planning required in response to the tsunami operation, the national society, supported by the Federation's delegation, moved steadily ahead with the expansion and further development of health, training and disaster management programmes, recruiting additional staff and running a number of important training courses. The delegation, recognizing the need to provide further support for MRCS, began a process for the recruitment of a number of new delegates who would provide expertise in the areas of finance, logistics/construction, health training, branch development, and water and sanitation.

Health and care

Background

With its wide portfolio of health projects, health and care remains the largest and most important of MRCS programmes – managed through the health and training divisions. Important activities continued during the reporting period, including essential training and community-based health activities, as is reported in the following sections. At the national headquarters, some attention was diverted from the programme during the reporting period when staff assisted in the preparations for the MRCS general assembly, held towards the end of January. Some headquarters staff, mainly the heads of divisions, were also involved in the preparation of the MRCS tsunami appeal. Despite this, the two divisions managed to implement most of their planned activities, which is a good evidence of their steadily increasing capacity to manage the MRCS health and care programme.

The Federation's delegation continued to provide valuable support to the MRCS in the areas of programme development, integration, coordination, experience sharing, monitoring and evaluation, and various degrees of technical support and advice. Extra burden was put on the Federation's delegation during the reporting period as the community-based health delegate ended her mission early February and unfortunately could not be replaced until early May. The Federation also continued to fund many of the MRCS health activities – including salary support to the current eight core staff positions in the health division (see the following sections) and six core staff positions in the training division. Further recruitments are envisaged for the next quarter for the MRCS and the Federation, as the national society is preparing to scale up its activities related to the tsunami appeal – including many activities relating to health and care.

Through funds carried over from 2004 (from the Japanese, Australian, New Zealand, British, German and Swedish Red Cross societies) and a recent generous contribution from the German Red Cross, the programme did not face any financial constraints during the reporting period.

Overall goal

The MRCS health and training divisions have the capacity to plan, manage, implement and evaluate effective programmes in a comprehensive and sustainable way.

Programme objective

Through the motivation, training, support and mobilization of its nationwide network of volunteers, the MRCS promotes a healthier and safer environment for people of Myanmar giving priority to the most vulnerable communities and individuals.

Progress/Achievements

***Expected result 1:** There is improved capacity of MRCS health and training divisions to effectively plan, manage, implement and evaluate programmes and activities.*

The capacity of the health division was further strengthened during the reporting period through the recruitment of three new staff members – one operational officer and two programme field officers. The division is now complete according to the new structure for the national society headquarters as agreed upon during the MRCS strategic planning process. However, due to the planned scaling up of MRCS health and care programmes relating to the tsunami operation, further recruitments are already envisaged for the next few months in the health division (two deputy heads of delegation and one project officer) and training divisions (one deputy head of delegation and five training assistants).

There was no direct training for the staff of health and training divisions during the reporting period other than introduction and on-the-job training for new staff members. Several trainings events, including a Project Planning Process (PPP) workshop, are however planned for the next reporting period. In the Mogok community-based health development project, the recruitment of field staff was completed during the reporting period and training was provided on the project outline and on baseline data collection. In the Keng Tung project, the increasing capacity of the project team, as well as the headquarters support staff, was clearly demonstrated when the project continued to run well despite the gap between Federation delegates. Likewise, the health division staff, with some support from the Keng Tung project team, finalized the proposal for the Mong Phyak community-based health project very much on their own and submitted it to the executive committee and donors for approval in March.

***Expected result 2:** There is improved capacity of MRCS branches effectively to manage and implement health and training programmes and activities, to respond to locally endemic diseases.*

The community-based first aid (CBFA) programme continued to expand to new branches during the reporting period, following the standard model of training-of-trainers (ToT) at state and division levels (organized by the headquarters) followed by multiplier courses at township level (organized by the townships). Three such ToT sessions were organized during this reporting period (in Kachin state, Kayah state and Kayin division) with 98 participants from 17 townships. CBFA multiplier courses were meanwhile organized in six states and divisions targeting 570 community members. Nine states and divisions also held trainings in basic first aid (2,659 participants) and three divisions conducted training in standard first aid (389 participants). At the national headquarters, the training division organized commercial first aid trainings for local staff from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) and for a private oil company. The training division also organized a field trip at the end of March to monitor and evaluate CBFA multiplier trainings in Northern Shan state.

The CBFA programme will continue to expand according to the same model also during the next reporting period. Three ToT sessions are currently envisaged (in Tanintharyi division, Chin state and Bago division) and multiplier trainings are being prepared for Kayin State. The latter will also be subject to a monitoring and evaluation field visit from the national headquarters. The training division is also planning to revisit existing manuals and guidelines, develop further information, education and communication (IEC) materials and develop the roles and

responsibilities of the core trainers at branch level. The first of two team leader workshops for selected volunteers from lower Myanmar is also planned for the next reporting period.

Expected result 3: *Communities have improved ability to respond to locally endemic health issues including HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis (TB) and diarrhoeal disease including access to care and support, improved health knowledge, and resources to support behavioural change.*

The implementation of the Keng Tung community-based health project continued as planned during the reporting period, despite the departure of the Federation's health delegate in early February. In the rural component, health sessions continued to be held in the target villages addressing various health concerns such as TB, malaria, diarrhoea, personal hygiene and HIV. CBFA training was also conducted in four villages, safe water projects were finalized in two villages and preparations were under way for a water project in a third village. In the urban component, the sexually transmitted infection (STI) campaign was followed-up and a care kit for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) was provided to eight patients, in addition to six visits for social support. The reporting period also saw the finalization of the MRCS proposal to expand its community-based health programme to a new project in Mong Phyak township, Eastern Shan state, to be funded by the donor consortium M3 (the British, German and Swedish Red Cross societies). Preparations were also underway for the preparatory phase of the next project, to be developed in Rakhine state with funding from the Finnish Red Cross.

MRCS also continued to address community health needs through its three HIV/AIDS projects and the reproductive health project. In the Fund for HIV/AIDS in Myanmar (FHAM) project, an exhibition and awareness raising activities were conducted in four project townships and outreach activities were being planned for the next period. In the UNICEF project, youth centres were established according to the plan, and activities were undertaken according to the schedule – including video shows held in the cinema halls. In the outreach programme on HIV/AIDS prevention for highway bus/truck drivers and their assistants, the MRCS conducted baseline surveys and advocacy meetings in two townships and arranged one ToT session. All the above projects will continue also in the next reporting period with a range of trainings and peer education sessions already in the pipeline.

Expected result 4: *Well informed voluntary blood donors are able to assist in ensuring an adequate blood supply.*

The reporting period saw the reactivation of the MRCS blood donor recruitment programme. Through the reactivated programme, MRCS will hold ToT sessions to train volunteer trainers who in turn will recruit and educate voluntary blood donors. The programme will be implemented in close collaboration with the national blood centre, which will be responsible for the actual collection and processing of the blood. During the reporting period a national workshop was organized to disseminate and advocate about the programme to Red Cross volunteers from the 17 states and divisions. In the next reporting period, one ToT session will be conducted at the national headquarters for volunteers from 15 townships of Yangon division. Preparations are now also underway for the World Blood Donor Day on 14 June, which will be celebrated in Mandalay. In relation to the celebrations, MRCS will organize a ToT session for 30 volunteers from the seven urban districts of Mandalay division.

Expected result 5: *There is improved capacity of selected branches to implement an integrated approach to respond to health and disaster issues.*

The process to integrate CBFA and disaster response training into the community-based disaster management (CBDM) programme continued during the reporting period. The most significant achievement was the holding of a CBDM curriculum development workshop, organized jointly by the health, disaster management and training divisions, bringing together 20 volunteers from selected disaster-prone states and divisions. The workshop was also attended by a health officer from the Federation's regional delegation in Bangkok. The recommendations from the workshop are now being consolidated for finalization of the curriculum to be piloted in selected townships during 2005.

An integrated approach was also undertaken through the development of the Myanmar tsunami appeal, which took place during the reporting period. All MRCS divisions, as well as governance, participated in this process, trying to take a holistic approach to the appeal, and to ensure that all divisions and their programmes will work closely together to ensure its successful implementation. Although the major bulk of the suggested activities clearly relate to disaster response and preparedness, many also relate to health and care, such as the development of a MRCS

emergency health care task force, the expansion of water and sanitation, psycho-social support and CBFA. Please refer to the appeal on the Federation's website at www.ifrc.org for more information.

Outputs

The capacity by the health and training divisions to manage the MRCS health and care programme was further strengthened during the reporting period through the recruitment of three additional staff members to the health division. With the additional recruitments now envisaged for the tsunami programme, both health and training divisions should be reasonably staffed to handle the increasing workload expected in the near future. The two heads of divisions are also taking a stronger management responsibility for their staff and programmes and are holding regular meetings to coordinate and focus the activities of their divisions. Several training courses for headquarters staff are planned ahead, which further will strengthen the capacity of the two divisions.

The capacity to manage the health and care programme has also continued to increase at branch level. In the Keng Tung project for example, the project team, with supervision from the project steering committee and the national headquarters, continued to implement the project activities despite reduced support from the Federation (due to the gap between delegates). The impact of the Keng Tung project at community level was also confirmed in the recently concluded mid-term evaluation, which confirmed demonstrated improved knowledge and changing behaviour to reduce malaria and diarrhoea in the target villages. There was also a demonstrated increase in the numbers and utilization of bed nets and the construction and use of fly-proof latrines and water installations.

Branch capacity building was also supported through the continued expansion of CBFA multiplier training courses on township level. With time, the ownership and support for these training courses will hopefully be taken over by core trainers at state and division levels, so that the training division at the national headquarters can concentrate more on the development of guidelines and curricula – not only for the CBFA programme but for all MRCS programmes with training components. This includes the important blood donor recruitment programme, which was restarted during the reporting period.

Through the community-based health programmes and through the projects on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, the capacities of target communities to respond to their local health challenges, and to address stigma and discrimination have also received continued support. With the new community-based health projects being initiated and planned, more sharing of best practices and models are envisaged for the future – possibly including a participatory evaluation of all MRCS HIV/AIDS activities later in the year. Finally, the holding of the CBDM curriculum development workshop in March was an important step forward in the development of this pilot integration programme that will be field tested later this year.

Constraints

In addition to the MRCS general assembly and the MRCS tsunami appeal, which diverted some resources, the MRCS health and training divisions faced only a few constraints during the reporting period. In one of the HIV/AIDS projects (funded by FHAM), the outreach activities were delayed because of late release of funding from the donor. As a result, the distribution of condoms and referral of patients with STI were delayed behind plan. One youth centre could not be opened as scheduled because of time constraints. Some other projects reported that meeting with authorities in the field also required time as those authorities were occupied during the reporting period. At the national headquarters, the training and health divisions reported progress in terms of development of internal systems, structures and procedures, but indicated that much more effort was needed to streamline those aspects and address the real administrative obstacles facing the divisions in their daily work. Further improvement of MRCS reporting, communication and financial procedures were mentioned as examples.

Disaster management

Background

The disaster management programme continues to be a key programme for the MRCS – managed via the disaster preparedness and disaster response (DP/DR) division at the national headquarters. The importance of the programme was again demonstrated during the reporting period when the tsunami struck the Myanmar coastline on 26 December 2004, killing 61 people and directly and indirectly affecting up to 15,000 people. Although the destruction was considerably lower than in the neighbouring countries, the disaster did prompt an immediate

response operation by the MRCS and has kept the DP/DR division, as well as the Federation's delegation, occupied during the entire reporting period. At the time of writing, the Myanmar tsunami appeal was just launched, seeking approximately CHF 13,000,000 over a five-year period to address relief and recovery needs, strengthen the national society's disaster preparedness capacity and scale up activities in health and disaster management.

Despite all the work relating to the tsunami, the MRCS did manage to carry out some of the regular disaster management activities planned for the reporting period as well. They were supported by the Federation's delegation – mainly through the disaster management delegate and disaster preparedness officer. Through this team, the Federation's delegation continued to provide valuable support to MRCS in the areas of programme development, integration, coordination, experience sharing, monitoring and evaluation, and various degrees of technical support and advice. The Federation also continued to provide funding for many MRCS disaster management activities – including salary support to the five core staff positions in the DP/DR division at the headquarters and two part-time positions at township level (for DP activities). Further recruitments are envisaged for the next reporting period, both for MRCS and the Federation, as MRCS prepares to scale up its activities related to the tsunami appeal – with much of the attention on recovery, reconstruction and disaster preparedness.

Through funds carried over from 2004 (from Japanese and Finnish Red Cross societies) and a recent generous contribution from the Norwegian Red Cross, the programme did not face any financial constraints during the reporting period.

Overall goal

The risk of disasters in Myanmar is reduced coupled with enhanced resilience of the most vulnerable communities and people.

Programme objective

The MRCS capacity in disaster management is strengthened, based on its network of volunteers and branch structures and in strategic partnership with the government and other agencies.

Progress/Achievements

Expected result 1: MRCS is acknowledged as a leading organization in disaster management with a recognized role in national coordination systems.

The Red Cross's leading role in carrying out humanitarian assistance was well acknowledged in Myanmar, when ICRC, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs and embassies quickly turned to the MRCS and the Federation for information and coordination following the tsunami disaster. To respond to these needs, the different agencies decided to set up a temporary tsunami coordination group, which was co-chaired by the Federation and the UN's resident coordinator. During the first weeks following the disaster, this group played a crucial role in sharing assessment reports and other data from the field, as well as in providing updates to embassies and the media. A lessons learned process has now been initiated to build on the experiences from the tsunami coordination and to see how the different agencies and organizations can prepare themselves better, and their coordination, for future disasters. This process will continue during the next reporting period through various working groups, for instance in DP, where the Federation will participate. A possible extension of this process might also include the resumption of dialogue with the government regarding the national disaster coordination mechanism and the roles of different agencies, in particular the MRCS, to support this.

Expected result 2: MRCS has an adequate response mechanism in place to fulfil its mandate in assisting the most vulnerable people in times of disaster, in an efficient manner.

Working with the tsunami operation, the MRCS continued to strengthen its response mechanism through the holding of another two Disaster Assessment and Response Team (DART) trainings during the reporting period – one in Rakhine state in February and one in Kayah state in March. All participants, including government department representatives, appreciated the training and acknowledged the importance of coordinated and trained cooperation before emergencies occur.

The MRCS also strengthened its response capacity in terms of visibility during the reporting period. An indicative work vest and t-shirt were developed with support from the Federation, which is to be distributed to trained volunteers for use in coming response operations. The national society also ordered new MRCS and Federation stickers for relief package marking, which will be printed and distributed during the next reporting period. At the national headquarters, the capacity of the DP/DR division was further strengthened through the provision of computer training during February to April. Combined with the provision of a new computer and printer/copier, the training is expected to continue until all division staff members, including new recruitments relating to the tsunami, have a reasonable working knowledge of the use of computers to ease their daily tasks.

For the next reporting period, the MRCS is planning to conduct two more DART training sessions (in Tanintharyi division and Kayah state). The DP/DR division will also participate in a team leader workshop that will be arranged after the Red Cross Week for key volunteers trained in DART, in CBFA ToT or as core trainers. Main objective for this workshop is to clarify team leader's roles and responsibilities and plan their possibilities as part of overall branch development – including the further building of response preparedness. Construction of the new MRCS regional warehouse in Pyay, Bago division, is currently ongoing and is expected to be completed in June.

***Expected result 3:** MRCS takes advantage of its nationwide grass-roots structure to promote community resilience to disasters.*

The CBDM programme took its first major step in March through the curriculum development workshop that was organized with key volunteers trained in CBFA and/or DART/CBDP. It was clear that a significant challenge in combining CBFA and CBDP will be the scaling down and prioritizing between some of the current important and interesting training topics. The first pilot CBDM ToT session is planned to be implemented either in the second or third quarter of 2005.

The Tharbaung Bridge in Ayeyarwady delta was finally completed during the reporting period and was officially opened on 19 February. The bridge, which has been financially supported by the Finnish Red Cross and Japanese Red Cross, will significantly improve the community resilience to disasters as half the community will no longer be cut off from health care and education during the five-month monsoon season.

The pilot DP project has also continued during the reporting period with the two DP field officers spending much time in the target villages to share ideas and lessons on community DP activities. Although positive feed back is being received from their activities, the project and in particular the concept of DP field officers, needs to be carefully reviewed and assessed before deciding on any escalation of the project. MRCS had planned to carry out a DP educational project for coastal areas concerning cyclones, floods tsunamis and other possible emergencies. This project is still pending due to lack human resource and increased demands from the tsunami reconstruction and planning.

Outputs

The MRCS response to the tsunami disaster has again confirmed that the national society has good capacity to respond to natural disasters. In many of the most affected areas, MRCS volunteers were immediately active in providing first aid and in assisting in the evacuation to safe areas. This was followed up by assessments from the national headquarters while the initial distribution of relief goods was carried out after one week. Additionally, the tsunami operation also highlighted a number of areas for further improvement that the society, with support from the Federation, will need to address. This includes the need for standard response procedures and a common assessment model to ensure quick and flexible support to volunteer response groups and to receive quicker initial assessment information from affected areas. To ensure a swift start for any operation there is also need to update all priority contact lists and, if possible, to survey secondary options to secure communications to and from affected areas. In the longer term, further delegation of authority from headquarters and states/divisions for local initiation of response and relief activities would also be very useful.

The identified need for further support to volunteers during and after response operations was a topic also widely discussed in the DART training sessions held during the quarter. This was particularly so during the training in Rakhine, where there is a cadre of very motivated and enthusiastic volunteers following last year's major cyclone operation there. The MRCS and the Federation are trying to find ways to sustain these volunteers and the DART training was one such important step. Also from that operation there were important lessons drawn regarding the

lack of proper support to volunteers when carrying out their service (such as the provision of food, means of transportation and proper instructions), which will now need to be readdressed in the follow up of the tsunami operation. Other important lessons from the tsunami that will also need follow-up include methods to improve coordination between agencies for the future, the roles of MRCS and the Federation, and the possible link to the government's national disaster mechanism.

Finally, the successful organization of the CBDM curriculum development workshop was an important output from the reporting period, which will enable this important pilot project to proceed as planned. The finalization of the Tharbaung Bridge will likewise make a huge difference for this particular vulnerable community, as they no longer need to be separated from proper health care and schooling during the five-month monsoon season. The pilot DP project is also reportedly having a positive output, but this will need to be properly assessed and documented before any further decisions are taken about the future of the project.

Constraints

The main constraint during the reporting period was clearly the tsunami operation which has and will continue to require much attention from the DP/DR division. With further recruitment of staff in the MRCS and the Federation, the situation will hopefully improve during the next reporting period, although it remains a challenge for the national society to run parallel disaster management programmes for the tsunami and annual appeals.

Humanitarian values

Background

MRCS continued its important activities in communication and information during the reporting period – in particular through various dissemination and advocacy activities organized by the communication division at the national headquarters. The division also played an active role in the preparation and organization of the general assembly in late January and continued to have a supporting role in all major events and workshops organized by the society. The division receives most of its support from the ICRC, with whom it organizes dissemination workshops and other advocacy activities. Relative to the support from ICRC (both funding and technical assistance), the support from the Federation is modest. Nevertheless, support is provided in the areas of programme development, integration, coordination, experience sharing, monitoring and evaluation, and various degrees of technical support and advice – trying to take a holistic approach where Red Cross humanitarian values are promoted through all MRCS programmes and activities. The responsibility for this support is shared between the head of delegation and the programme coordinator. The Federation also contributes to the salaries of two core staff positions in the division while the other two are covered by the ICRC.

Through funds carried over from 2004 (from the Japanese Red Cross and Finnish Red Cross) and a recent generous contribution from the German Red Cross, the programme did not face any financial constraints during the reporting period.

Overall goal

Increased visibility, credibility and support are achieved for the humanitarian programmes and activities of the Red Cross in Myanmar.

Programme objective

Through its ongoing communications, public relations and advocacy programmes and events, the MRCS promotes humanitarian programmes and values in Myanmar and also key national/global Red Cross and Red Crescent advocacy themes.

Progress/Achievements

Expected result 1: The capacity of MRCS is strengthened to disseminate and publicize the Movement's role and programmes and provide support for specific communication needs of the health, training and disaster management divisions.

There were no particular capacity building activities carried out in the communication division during the reporting period, although some important experiences were gained through the carrying out of regular programme activities as described in the following sections. For the next reporting period there are plans to initiate a comprehensive self-assessment of the communication division. The objective will be to define the future role of the division and to identify the resources (human and material) needed to undertake these tasks. This process will jointly be supported by the ICRC and the Federation and is expected to run over a period of two to three months.

***Expected result 2:** Media relations activities move ahead, ensuring high-level media coverage of ongoing programmes, projects and events of the MRCS with particular emphasis on the work of volunteers at community level and with timely reporting on disaster response operations.*

MRCS continued to enjoy a reasonably high media coverage in the two major local newspapers. Almost every week, the news featured some shorter articles about ongoing Red Cross activities, in particular when national workshops were held in Yangon. The media coverage was very intense during the early weeks after the tsunami, as well as around the general assembly in late January. During the first week of the tsunami, the media attention from news agencies abroad was also very high, requiring much time from the head of delegation and disaster management delegate. Some of the articles regarding the MRCS' tsunami response emphasized the crucial work of the volunteers at community level and their outstanding efforts in the affected areas.

***Expected result 3:** There is increased understanding of the role and responsibilities of MRCS and the Movement in Myanmar and of the need for the protection of the Red Cross emblem by key external stakeholders.*

Dissemination about the MRCS and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement remains the most important focus for the communication division – targeting both internal as well as external stakeholders. The most important activity remains the three-day dissemination workshops that the society organizes almost monthly at the branch level with support from the ICRC. Two such workshops were held during the reporting period – in Karen state in January (delayed from 2004) and Eastern Shan state in March. Both these workshop successfully included police officers in the training, a practice which most likely will continue in future workshops. Another workshop is scheduled for the next reporting period, to be held in Southern Shan state in April.

The communication division also continued to produce and distribute the MRCS Newsletter – now in a slightly larger format than previous. One issue of the Myanmar language version of the newsletter was published during the reporting period (out of six issues per year) and was distributed to all states and divisions and most townships (2,000 copies in total). For the next reporting period, the second issue is in the pipeline, as well as the first issue of the English version (out of three issues per year). The latter will also be distributed to branches and, sometimes, to authorities, embassies and organizations in Yangon. To assess the true impact and use of the MRCS Newsletter, a questionnaire will be developed during the next reporting period and will be submitted to all MRCS branches for completion. Based on the findings, MRCS will decide on the future of the newsletter – including decisions on the number of issues, language, distribution and contents.

Outputs

The main output from the reporting period was the successful inclusion of police officers in the two dissemination workshops held in Karen state and Eastern Shan state. This proved again to be very successful with satisfying reports coming in after the training from the police officers themselves, as well as from many MRCS brigade volunteers whom claimed they now received much better support and understanding from the police (the township police officers often play the second role of MRCS brigade commanders). In Eastern Shan state, the police commander for the entire state has also shown a very supportive role towards the MRCS following this training and is giving very clear messages to his officers to always respect the Red Cross's unique mandate and avoid misuse of the MRCS volunteers. Owing to this, more police officers will likely be invited to future dissemination workshops, perhaps to complement specific dissemination sessions developed specifically for the police.

Another major output from the reporting period was that the MRCS, the Federation and the ICRC finally had time to allow some focus to the communication division, which resulted in the plan for the next reporting period to initiate the self-assessment of the role of the entire division and to assess the usefulness of the *MRCS Newsletter* in its current form.

Constraints

The major constraint from the reporting period was the continued lack of capacity and direction for the communication division. This challenge will hopefully begin to be addressed more systematically during the coming reporting period.

Organizational development

Background

There were some significant achievements in terms of organizational development in the MRCS during the reporting period – in particular relating to the 56th Central Council meeting and 8th General Assembly both held in late January. With support from the Federation's Capacity Building Fund (CBF), the society also established a senior management-level unit responsible for all capacity building issues, which is key step forward. The new unit, entitled the Development and Coordination Unit, will report directly to the executive director and initially includes two staff members (development coordinators) – one acting as a focal point for organizational development and the other as focal point for youth and volunteer issues. Following the general assembly there was also a significant change in the governance of the society – with changes in the full-time executive committee, including the appointment of a new president.

The Federation continued to provide support to various organizational development processes of the society during the reporting period. This was accomplished by all delegates and officers through their support to MRCS programmes, complemented with a more targeted technical support towards specific organizational development needs and priorities by the head of delegation and the programme coordinator. The Federation's support continued in the areas of programme development, integration, coordination, experience sharing, funding, monitoring and evaluation, and various degrees of technical support and advice – trying to take a holistic approach where capacity building and organizational development are part of all MRCS programmes.

Following several years of capacity building at the national headquarters, the MRCS, with support from the Federation, is now initiating a process to focus more attention to organizational development issues at branch level. This will be accomplished through a branch development programme to which funding already has been secured from CBF, hopefully to run over a three-year period. This important contribution will be complemented with additional support from the ongoing tsunami operation – mainly for material and construction support, but also to fund a branch development delegate for an initial period of one year to provide appropriate support to the programme implementation. The new programme will build on the findings of the recently concluded branch survey process and embark on a truly integrated approach – building on all the important branch development activities already undertaken by the MRCS through their various programmes.

Through funds carried over from 2004 (from the ICRC, the British Red Cross and the Swedish Red Cross) and the recent generous contribution from CBF, the programme did not face any financial constraints during the reporting period.

Overall goal

MRCS has developed and strengthened its capacity to be the leading humanitarian organization in Myanmar.

Programme objective

MRCS has well structured, fully organized, trained and competent human resources at all levels for delivering community-based services efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in Myanmar.

Progress/Achievements

Expected result 1: MRCS has a clear sense of the strategic direction for the society, what it wants to achieve, and how and with whom it will work to realize its goal of becoming a well-functioning national society.

The MRCS held the first of its biannual central council meeting on 27 January, attended by representatives from all the 17 MRCS states and divisions. One of the topics discussed was the draft MRCS strategic plan for 2005-2009, which was approved as draft and accepted as future direction for MRCS. The central council meeting was

immediately followed by the 8th General Assembly on 29 January 2005, where the draft strategic plan again was approved. The plan will now be distributed to MRCS branches and national headquarters management for comments and feedback before proceeding with the development of the second draft. Once approved by all, the strategic plan will need to be properly disseminated throughout the national society, and its programmes and plans adapted accordingly. This process is expected to take at least the rest of the year – consideration will also be given at this time to other related policies needed in the society, such as for communications, branch development and volunteering and membership.

Another significant outcome of the general assembly was the appointment of a new president of the society, as well as a change of members in the full-time executive committee. The new full-time executive committee now consists of five members, namely the president, the honorary secretary, the honorary treasurer, the executive committee member responsible for disaster management and the executive director. The general assembly also approved the suggested new structure for MRCS national headquarters (five divisions) and to proceed with the establishment of a small development and coordination unit, reporting directly to the executive director.

***Expected result 2:** Improved operational systems and structures are put in place with well defined roles of governance and management, as well as better programme planning, monitoring and evaluation.*

The new president has acted quickly and firmly to play a strong leadership role in the society. The exact roles and responsibilities within the executive committee are still to be finalized, but clearly the president is in charge. At the same time he and other committee members seem to be open for delegating more authority to the management level. This would be a timely move as the MRCS management team also is getting stronger and starting to act more as a group of managers – led by the executive director. During the reporting period, the MRCS for example began to have regular management meetings every two weeks. This is still in the early stages, but will hopefully become a regular practice with the executive director acting as the link between management and governance (of which the director also is a member).

The restructuring of the five divisions of the national headquarters also continued during the reporting period – with new staff being recruited for the health division, and for the new development and coordination unit. In the preparations for all new recruitments, the MRCS tried to adopt a standard approach using similar job descriptions, open recruitment procedures and a standardized salary system. The process to establish a MRCS staffing and human resource policy is far from complete but has begun and will be a key priority for the next reporting period.

Four workshops are planned for the next quarter that will address other issues relating to improved management, programme planning and implementation - a workshop on MRCS finance regulations in April, a team leader training session and a branch development workshop in mid-May and a PPP training course for staff at the national headquarters in late May.

***Expected result 3:** A pilot branch development programme is steadily progressing, including clearly defined elements of youth and volunteer management, gender and diversity.*

The initiation of the branch development programme was delayed during the reporting period due to all the work relating to the MRCS general assembly and the tsunami operation. The first concrete step was the setting up of the development and coordination unit, to which two very qualified MRCS staff members were recruited starting 1 April. The next step will now be to have a workshop with representatives from all the 17 states and divisions and selected townships to advocate about the new programme and to encourage their ownership and lead of the continued implementation. At this workshop a number of decisions are also expected to be taken regarding the practical implementation of the programme, as well as other issues relating to branch development that the branches want the headquarters support in addressing – including volunteer management and membership issues. The CBF application and the tsunami appeal will also need to be explained and discussed, as they are providing all the funding to the branch development programme and both have their separate rules and conditions. Also planned for the next reporting period is the assignment of two staff members from the development and coordination unit to a Volunteering-in-Emergencies Workshop in Kuala Lumpur and to the 6th Organizational Development Forum in Hanoi, to network and share experiences with other organizational development colleagues from the Southeast Asia region. The unit staff will also work closely with the training division to develop an integrated training module for capacity building of branch leaders, to be initiated towards the end of the next reporting period.

Expected result 4: The MRCS is a more accountable and credible organization in terms of finance and administration and can mobilize wider support at international, national and local levels.

The important efforts to strengthen the financial management of the MRCS continued during the reporting period – under the leadership of the head of finance division. Some of the achievements included the successful closing of end of year accounts, the opening of the new financial year (1 April) with an accounting software system, the agreement between MRCS, the Federation and ICRC on standardized per diem levels and successful negotiations with the Danish Red Cross to channel their coming direct support via the MRCS finance division. The division also prepared for an important workshop on MRCS finance regulations, with staff from all divisions, co-facilitated by the Federation's regional finance development delegate from its regional delegation in Bangkok.

As part of the branch development programme (relating to CBF), the head of division also carried out a field visit to Ayeyarwaddy division in March to conduct a preliminary survey of the division's fundraising activities and financial management at township level. The findings confirmed that few townships have income generation activities and these were often on an ad hoc basis and not officially recorded. The handling of bank accounts did not follow procedures and only a few township branches submitted financial reports to the national headquarters. Further field visits are required before any firm conclusions can be drawn. Already it is clear that some kind of instructions are required from the national headquarters – for example, regarding the receipt and disbursement of cash, operation of bank account, maintenance of financial books and records, monthly financial reporting and the preparation of annual financial reports. These instructions should eventually be included in more binding financial regulations for branches, to be drafted after a more thorough survey and discussions with other branches.

Outputs

There have been some significant developments in terms of organizational development in MRCS during the reporting period. This is particularly so through the appointment of the new president of the society, as well as the re-composition of the full time executive committee, which potentially will have a big impact on the national society's development over the next few years. The new president and executive committee members are yet to finalize their internal roles and responsibilities in detail, as well as their relations with management, but there is a clear mood for change, with the new governance showing a high level of interest and commitment to address any challenges the society might face. The working relationship between the president, the full-time executive committee and the Federation is also very constructive, which is promising for the future.

There have also been some significant developments within the MRCS management. The heads of division are taking a stronger management lead over their divisions and have, during the reporting period, clearly also increased the interaction and coordination between the divisions. A good example of this was the introduction of regular management meetings between the heads of division – led by the executive director. Three such meetings have been held during the reporting period, covering topics of common concern for the divisions, such as the branch development programme. It was jointly agreed that the Federation and ICRC's cooperation delegate would only take part in these meetings upon invitation and for specific topics, but the minutes from the meetings would always be shared afterwards. The establishment and staffing of the development and coordination unit was also a significant step forward, as the national society now has two senior managers able to work full time to promote and support capacity building within the national headquarters and branches.

The continued work to strengthen the MRCS financial procedures also provided important results during the reporting period. The closing of the accounts and holding of successful external audits for three years previous is one major indicator that the investment in the MRCS finance division is starting to yield results. This is true also with the introduction of the accounting software and successful negotiations with the Danish Red Cross to channel their direct funding via the MRCS finance division (rather than directly to their project staff as was originally planned). All these steps confirm that the society places priority on finance development and wants to be accountable towards its partners and members. With each step, the confidence of the society is also growing.

For the next reporting period a number of important activities are planned that will have an impact on the MRCS's continuing work to develop its capacity. First, there is the workshop on finance regulations, which is expected to bring finance and non-finance people together to discuss common finance issues and to provide recommendations for the development of new finance regulations for the society. Second, there will be a team leader training session with selected volunteer trainers brought together to discuss important aspects of the MRCS training activities,

including volunteer management. Third, there will be the branch development workshop, which will bring together representatives from all states and divisions to officially launch the branch development programme. Fourth, there will be a PPP training course organized for staff members at the national headquarters. Three other key challenges for the next reporting period will also be redrafting the national strategic plan, addressing the function and capacity of the MRCS communication division and initiating the process to develop a standardized salary and recruitment system – possibly to be outlined in a human resource policy.

Constraints

The major constraint during the reporting period was the high level of time and energy that was consumed by both governance and management (as well as the Federation) to prepare for the central council meeting and the general assembly and all the work related to the tsunami appeal. Due to the above, the branch development programme did really not begin until 1 April, when the new staff members of the development and coordination unit were recruited. A lot of activities are, however, already planned for the next reporting period, which should compensate for some of the delayed initiation.

Implementation and management

Coordination, cooperation and strategic partnerships

With few international organizations operating within Myanmar, the tsunami presented an opportunity and the necessity to ensure a coordinated approach to both the operation itself and the communications flow. Based on previous experience, most organizations contacted MRCS and/or the Federation's delegation for initial information and verification of facts, and following a meeting called by the Federation on 28 December, a tsunami liaison group was established, chaired by the Federation with support from UNDP. The group ensured that assessments were carried out in all affected areas, data was verified and information on each organization's operation shared. Of particular note was the joint statement issued at a meeting on 6 January to which the diplomatic community and the media were invited, in response to speculation, particularly in the international media, on the extent of the damage caused by the tsunami of 26 December 2004. This joint approach reopened the discussion on better overall coordination and contingency planning between organizations, and further cooperation is envisaged in the coming months. Within the Movement, the MRCS and the Federation's delegation welcomed the assistance of the ICRC in the initial phase with their sub-delegation in Mawlamyine taking an active part in the Tanintharyi division assessment. The tsunami operation also prompted existing Red Cross partners to offer support to Myanmar, and brought new partners and donors to the table.

Effective representation and advocacy

The visibility and credibility of the Red Cross increased through the tsunami operation and the role of the Federation as coordinator of the international assistance was welcomed and supported by the organizations and the authorities in Myanmar as well as by the wider international community and the media. There were further opportunities to speak with the business community, visiting tour groups and the general public, who all responded generously to the tsunami operation. Subsequent meetings and liaison are planned with them. The joint presentation by the Federation's head of delegation and the MRCS head of disaster management department was well accepted in the Red Cross Hong Kong Tsunami Forum, given the limited impact in Myanmar in comparison with neighbouring countries, and the comprehensive approach to building the overall national headquarters and branch capacity to deliver community-based disaster management and health programmes opened a new wave of discussions and potential partnerships.

Delegation management

The contract of the community-based health delegate concluded and in spite of best efforts the replacement is due to arrive only in the next reporting period. Additionally, it was recognized that with an increased workload, further support would be needed. Job descriptions were prepared and the recruitment process began for five new delegates and the replacement for the outgoing health coordinator, whose contract ends in June.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page and contact information.](#)

APPEAL No. 05AA055

PLEDGES RECEIVED

14/06/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,494,811	TOTAL COVERAGE 66.9%	
OPENING BALANCE				258,430		
BRITISH - RC		3,000	GBP	6,543	04.05.05	HOD
CAPACITY BUILDING FUND				80,000	18.01.05	BRANCH FINANCE DEVELOPMENT
GERMAN RC				149,733	04.04.05	MRCS SCHOOL PROG., HIV/AIDS PEER EDUCATION PROG.
GERMAN RC				72,727	04.04.05	COMMUNITY BASED HEALTH DELEGATE
GERMAN RC				66,310	04.04.05	HOD
GERMAN RC				37,433	04.04.05	COMMUNICATION, HUMANITARIAN VALUES
MYANMAR - PRIVATE DONOR				283	10.02.05	
NORWEGIAN - RC		1,000,000	NOK	187,500	28.01.05	DISASTER MANAGEMENT, RISK REDUCTION
SWEDISH - RC		284,000	SEK	48,564	14.04.05	PROGRAM COORDINATOR, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				907,523	CHF	60.7%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
AUSTRALIA	DELEGATE(S)			11,800		
FINLAND	DELEGATE(S)			81,000		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				92,800	CHF	6.2%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	