

ANNUAL REPORT



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

LAO PDR

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 178 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Appeal No; 01.34/2002; Appeal target: CHF 524,988; Appeal coverage: 57%

Overall analysis of the programme w

Organisational development (OD) and capacity building, integrated with a strong humanitarian values component, has continued to be the Lao delegation's flagship programme as Lao Red Cross (LRC) and its partners begin the process of translating the recently signed Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS) from words into action. The LRC development and annual work plans recognise OD and capacity building as the top priority in all core programme areas. Consequently, developing capacity at headquarters, in consultation with PNS and branches, has been the Federation's priority.

During the past year, steady progress has been made in significant areas of the OD programme. However, improvements in matters related to governance and the re-launching of the youth programme at headquarters has been limited.

With branches established in every province of the country, and all but two unsponsored, LRC has focused during the year on building its management capabilities at headquarters and across the network. It has planned, with Federation assistance, to implement a comprehensive human resource development strategy that will concentrate on fundraising - developing a comprehensive plan that draws on the experiences and successes of LRC branches. The strategy will also cover training in project management and administration and equip the national society with clear procedures for managing communications, finances and relief supplies. Other priorities during the year have included support for the annual planning process, expansion of dissemination activities with ICRC, assisting the information/fundraising division develop a basic communications plan, building the basic branch level disaster management capacity through the community-based disaster management programme, providing administrative and financial reporting services for the blood programme, and generally facilitating specific activities in the health programme (such as HIV/AIDS), with the support of the Federation's regional health unit.

The Federation's overall role in Lao PDR, as a facilitator committed to listening and seeking advice from different quarters, has been well established. A challenge for 2003 and beyond is to convince CAS partners of the delegation's value in facilitating the CAS process - coordinating external resources, and providing technical support to the OD and capacity building programme.

The Federation delegation is well integrated within LRC because of its location, physical proximity and easy access to national society leadership and headquarters staff. A relationship of trust and confidence also exists between national society and delegation staff. Under the CAS, further scope

will be available to formalise cost sharing and the pooling of resources. Conditions exist, therefore, for further integration with key partners in Lao.

Problems encountered and steps taken

The absence, in early 2001 of a Federation representative in Lao PDR hindered progress of the OD programme for several months. The key role of the Danish Red Cross in supporting the position, together with support to LRC by other PNSs, has demonstrated the value of working as a Federation. The CAS now serves as a framework for the sustainable development of the LRC and will continue to enhance coordination between its partners.

Of increasing priority to the OD programme has been equipping staff at LRC headquarters with the skills necessary directly to support branches. Development of a human resources plan that addresses fundamental needs, such as staff motivation and career development, and a fundraising plan that will enable the national society raise sufficient funds to recruit and pay its own staff (at present staff are appointed and paid by the government) has also been vital. Progress made over the last six months has helped address these needs, but the process is slow and requires long term support by LRC partners.

Given the political system in Lao, as well as the country's multi-ethnic and cultural diversity, the key to successful development of the national society lies in a patient, painstaking and persevering approach, based on building relationships of trust and mutual confidence. This cannot be done quickly or from a distance. The Federation's strategy of progressively phasing out from a 'traditional' more operational delegation to a Federation/CAS support office in 2003 seeks to address the issue in an affordable and appropriate manner.

As LRC adjusts during this transitional period, it will be essential to maintain a Federation representative in-country. A transparent exit strategy with clearly identified steps and a time frame should also be implemented. Since March 2002, at a partnership meeting in Jakarta during which challenges faced by the Federation and LRC in managing the change process were highlighted, the Lao delegation has been implementing this strategy. Like the CAS, the foundation of the exit strategy is based on the coordinated implementation of core programmes by LRC and its partners. OD and capacity building are central to this strategy.

Future challenges

In 2003, it is envisaged that the Lao delegation will progressively become a Federation/CAS office with the primary function of providing a range of services, connected to management of the CAS, to LRC and its partners. The office will be staffed by Federation national staff and LRC counterparts, supervised by a visiting/part-time Federation (or PNS) representative based within the region, but not necessarily in Lao.

Funding will be crucial for the Federation to continue its lead role in OD and capacity building, particularly at LRC headquarters where leadership and staff motivation will determine the viability of a human resources development and fundraising policy. The national society and partners have agreed to support priority activities such as branch development (specifically in the two unsponsored branches); management training (aimed specifically at developing a streamlined and transparent internal financial system); implementation of a communications strategy; expansion of information/dissemination activities; and a re-launch of the youth programme at headquarters.

In addition to the support provided by the various regional technical units, implementation of the health, disaster management and HIV/AIDS programmes will become the responsibility of the national society and PNS partners.

To meet these challenges, a strategy has been developed around the 'window of opportunity' that exists between now and end-2003 (while funding is available to maintain a full strength delegation in

Lao) to manage a realistic phasing-out from the traditional type of delegation to a model based on a flexible CAS.

Disaster Management w

Emphasis of the programme has been to establish a realistic and sustainable community based disaster management (CBDM) programme. To achieve this, the Federation has been assisting LRC to create a disaster management capability throughout the society, with effective links to the state system and strong interaction within the Federation's global and regional framework.

Objective 1 To create a disaster response capability in every branch of the Lao Red Cross.

Achievements

During seasonal heavy rains, LRC and the Federation closely monitored the flood situation on the basis of regular reports from Red Cross branches and information gathered from government agencies, the UN and NGO partners. The national society was active in flood relief operations, reaching 500 of the worst affected families in five villages in Vientiane municipality. Comprehensive needs and damage assessments conducted during this period helped LRC staff develop skills in assessment, planning and procurement.

Volunteer response teams in northern and southern branches have been established, and the first draft of community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) materials completed and distributed to branches throughout the country for review and field testing.

Constraints

Finalising the content of the disaster preparedness training module has been delayed because the consultation process between LRC headquarters and PNSs has taken longer than anticipated. Training will be rolled out in the first quarter of 2003, when the module is completed. Nevertheless, the attendance by disaster management staff in regional disaster management committee meetings and other regional gatherings has brought positive results in terms of knowledge sharing and information exchange. This has been coupled with an awareness of the time required for development and testing of appropriate CBDM materials.

Objective 2 To build a national disaster preparedness system with effective links with the state system and with the regional Red Cross societies.

Achievements

Focus in the disaster preparedness programme has been on finalising the CBDP training module. An assessment of relief stock levels conducted by the national society has provided the basis for further development of guidelines, and training needs on warehouse management.

Constraints

Conceptual understanding of disaster management at various levels within the national society needs to be developed. In addition to this, poor English language skills within the LRC disaster management division has proved a drawback to the programme. To address this issue, the Federation and PNSs have organised English language training courses for all national society staff.

Health and Care w

Background and achievements/lessons to date

The priority in this programme centres on the core areas of blood, HIV/AIDS, community-based first aid (CBFA) and water and sanitation. This has been based on identified needs of the vulnerable in communities where access to health care is particularly difficult, such as ethnic groups living in rural

and mountainous areas (where only 21 per cent of births are attended by skilled staff). The average life expectancy for Laotians is less than 53 years and the under-five mortality rate stands at 105/1000 live births. Only 46 per cent of the population benefits from adequate sanitation facilities and, according to the health ministry, access to water supply and adequate sanitation is limited to 55 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively. Less than 9 per cent of schools have latrines.

Although within South East Asia, Lao is ranked as a low HIV/AIDS prevalence country, and available figures do not point to a real epidemic, potential exists for a rapid increase in HIV transmission among vulnerable groups, through cross border transmission (seasonal workers, truck drivers) and other mobility factors.

The national society has collaborated with several partners in the area of HIV/AIDS, notably the Australian Red Cross. In the area of branch development, the Netherlands and Swiss Red Cross Societies have focused on CBFA and water and sanitation in several provinces while the Danish Red Cross is assisting three northern provinces with primary health care interventions. The Japanese Red Cross has been closely involved with the blood programme, with a review due during 2003. Meanwhile the French Red Cross has expressed interest in starting operations in two branches, concentrating on CBFA and water and sanitation. While all these initiatives have helped build LRC capacity, and certainly contributed to improving the health of vulnerable people in target communities, the overall lack of coordination and a uniform approach, has detracted from the society's ability to maintain and continue sustainable programmes from within.

Objective 1 *To strengthen the capacities of the national voluntary blood donor recruitment system by complementing the work of, and providing administrative support to, the Lao Red Cross/Japanese Red Cross programme in cooperation with the regional health unit.*

Achievements

During the year under review, the Federation continued to provide administrative support and financial reporting services to the LRC/Japanese Red Cross blood programme. The programme has increasingly focused on developing an effective national blood donor recruitment system, in 2002 through an organised blood recruitment campaign on World Red Cross Red Crescent Day. Of concern, however, has been figures indicating that while the number of voluntary non-remunerated blood donors continues to increase, the quantity of blood collected remains unchanged.

In collaboration with the Centre of Laboratory and Epidemiology, the blood centre expanded access to safe blood to seven locations in the country during the year.

Constraints

No specific constraints have been experienced. However, there is genuine concern within LRC about ensuring sustainable long-term support for the blood programme after the end of 2003 when Japanese Red Cross funding may reduce or cease. Addressing this important issue will be a priority for the mid-term review of the blood programme, planned in March 2003.

Objective 2: *To strengthen capacity of Lao Red Cross health division in the planning, management and coordination of the CBFA and water and sanitation programmes.*

Achievements

In June the regional health unit and Lao delegation, together with the Luang Prabang Red Cross branch, organised a regional water and sanitation training programme in Laos. The branch played a key role arranging practical field exercises for sessions in managing effective water and sanitation programmes.

Constraints

No specific constraints have been experienced.

Objective 3: *To complement the ongoing work of the Lao Red Cross/Australian Red Cross HIV/AIDS peer group education programme through enhanced regional cooperation and networking.*

Achievements

Together with the Federation and PNS, LRC celebrated World Red Cross Red Crescent Day with an event that focused on the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS. LRC used the Federation tagline ‘The Truth about AIDS...pass it on’ in a successful question and answer session with youth volunteers that received good coverage from the local media.

The LRC, Australian Red Cross and Federation are developing new approaches to include HIV/AIDS messages in other programme areas.

Constraints

No specific constraints have been experienced.

Organisational Development w

Steady progress has been made in the past year with most aspects of the organisational development programme; however, as mentioned earlier in this report, issues of governance and the relaunch of the youth programme at headquarters has seen limited improvement.

Funding from both the Swiss government and German Red Cross has enabled the Federation, working in close cooperation with PNS, to support a range of activities for LRC. In addition to running their own programmes the Danish, Netherlands and Australian Red Cross Societies, in particular, have been committed to supporting capacity building initiatives at LRC headquarters.

Objective 1 *To ensure that all Lao Red Cross senior managers are equipped with the basic management skills needed to run the society*

Achievements

Main achievements during the final quarter of 2002 included: assisting with the formulation of a human resources/fundraising policy and plan linked to a management training programme (based on recommendations of the training needs assessment); development of the 2002 staff training plan (targeting specific skills such as English language, computers, financial management, editing, report and proposal writing, and warehouse management); revision of the LRC human and financial resource policy; and preparation of a plan of action for 2003 with an emphasis on fundraising. In this respect, efforts continue to recruit a professional fundraising adviser to assist LRC headquarters.

In the main, the LRC 2002 annual work plan (based on the society’s five-year development plan) has been successfully implemented. During the course of the year, the national society completed its self-assessment and now has implemented most of the key recommendations. A priority of the Federation has been to assist LRC, in close cooperation with all PNS, institutionalise the annual planning process both at headquarters and branches. This has been done through a series of regional and national planning and review meetings, supported by regular informal consultation between all partners. .

Constraints

Vital to LRC is the development of a human resources plan that addresses fundamental needs such as staff motivation and career development, and a fundraising plan that will enable it to raise sufficient funds to recruit and pay its own staff (at present staff are appointed and paid by the government).

Progress made over the last six months has helped address these needs, but the process is slow and requires long term support by LRC partners to succeed.

Objective 2 *To ensure that the society has functioning systems and clear procedures for monitoring finance and relief goods, and for management processes and decisions.*

Achievements

Concrete steps have been taken by the delegation to assist LRC establish a standard, professional and transparent financial management and reporting system around the CAS process. The LRC and CAS partners have appointed a consultant, prepared terms of reference and agreed on a timetable for completing the work of the Federation. The Lao delegation has also supported OD and monitoring focal persons at LRC, responsible for day to day monitoring of the national society's annual work plan. A joint stocktaking exercise was carried out during the year to monitor relief items.

Constraints

No specific constraints have been experienced.

Objective 3 *To significantly strengthen the management and programming of the four most recently established branches which currently receive no external assistance*

Achievements

Through the programme, the Federation has provided financial and technical support to unsponsored branches, funding their participation at planning and review meetings. Priority areas for future support (now still at the development stage) include skills training in office and financial management, communications, fundraising, and youth and branch development.

In September, the French Red Cross initiated a programme that included organisational development, water and sanitation, and CBFA for branches in Vientiane province and Sayabouri. The two remaining unsponsored branches continue to receive assistance from the Federation.

Constraints

The recruitment of a local resource development professional to help the LRC information and fundraising division set-up a system to develop and implement a realistic fundraising plan, continues to be challenging. The Federation has been exploring the option of recruiting a suitable staff-on-loan from a national society in the region, possibly from the Thai Red Cross.

Objective 4 *To assist Lao Red Cross with addressing outstanding management/governance issues highlighted at the OD workshop in November 2000*

Achievements

Regional planning meetings have provided an opportunity for LRC and the Federation to start addressing some of the fundamental governance issues with branches, at the grassroots level. A working group has been established to revise prime ministerial decree 36 and the LRC statutes. It has reviewed operating procedures and guidelines for the organisation of committees, enrolment of members, and the recruitment, management and retention of volunteers.

Constraints

Progress with governance issues has remained slow due to the prevailing political system in Lao PDR and the role of LRC within this system.

Objective 5 *To lay the foundation for a strong and well developed communications capacity*

Achievements

There is growing awareness within LRC of the need for an effective communications strategy to boost the Red Cross image in Lao society. With support of the Federation, the communications plan of action for 2002 has been prepared. Crucial to the plan is strengthening of the national society's information/fundraising division. The first Lao communications workshop in August has led to the review and development of a work plan for the LRC communications strategy for 2003.

Constraints

None have been experienced.

Coordination and Management w

The Federation's main task has been to help LRC adjust to the 'change process' as the delegation phases-out from the traditional type of office to a model based on a flexible CAS. A realistic strategy for implementing this change has been developed by the Federation, in consultation with LRC and its CAS partners.

Objective 1 *To establish a fully inclusive cooperation assistance strategy (CAS) which supports the Lao Red Cross national plan and strategy and is accepted by all the partners.*

Achievements

The CAS memorandum of understanding, signed in September by LRC and its key partners (the Federation, ICRC and PNS based in Laos), is now being implemented. It serves both as a flexible framework for enhanced coordination and programme management as well as a useful marketing tool. Establishment of a transparent internal financial management system remains a priority.

Constraints

None have been experienced.

Objective 2 *To develop and implement the in-country management approaches needed to ensure the CAS is correctly implemented.*

Achievements

The delegation's main priority has been to further strengthen the cooperation and coordination that exists between LRC, the Federation, PNS and the ICRC. Central to this has been the involvement of all players in the LRC annual planning and monitoring process. Coordination meetings have been held quarterly, between the Federation, PNS and ICRC and complement ongoing informal meetings.

Constraints

No specific constraints have been experienced.

Conclusions

Significant progress has been made in the past year to ensure the sustainable development of the LRC. The OD and capacity building programme, founded on the society's annual planning process and five-year development plan, have been integral to assisting LRC move towards its goal of becoming a well-functioning national society. This has been underpinned by the newly signed CAS to which LRC and its partners are fully committed. The Lao delegation, in consultation with LRC and its partners, has evolved a clear strategy - phasing from a traditional Federation delegation to a Federation/CAS support office. Through this model, it will endeavour to provide a range of quality and cost effective services tailored to meet the future needs of the LRC, ICRC, PNSs and other partners.

Since 2001, funding provided by the Swiss government and German Red Cross has enabled the Lao delegation to provide across-the-board support to the national society for its OD and capacity building programme. Unspent balances carried forward from the 2000 flood operations continued to fund the

small disaster preparedness programme. The main priority now is to secure continued support for 2003 and beyond, to both consolidate and develop the work in progress.

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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

Interim report	
Annual report	X
Final report	

Appeal No & title: 01.34/2002 Laos
 Period: year 2002
 Project(s): PLA000, 005, 160
 Currency: CHF

I - CONSOLIDATED RESPONSE TO APPEAL

FUNDING	CASH		KIND & SERVICES		TOTAL INCOME
	Contributions	Comments	Goods/Services	Personnel	
Appeal budget	524,988				
less Cash brought forward	178,565				
TOTAL ASSISTANCE SOUGHT	346,423				
<i>Contributions from Donors</i>					
Australian Govt.via Australian Red C (DGNAU)	6,457				6,457
Danish Red Cross # 1 (DNDK01)	27,231				27,231
Danish Red Cross (DNDK)	149,840				149,840
German Red Cross (DNDE)	37,826				37,826
Japanese Red Cross (DNJP)	57,175				57,175
Swiss Govt.via Swiss Red Cross (DGNCH)	37,500				37,500
DENMARK				59,960	59,960
TOTAL	316,028			59,960	375,988

II - Balance of funds

OPENING	178,565
CASH INCOME Rcv'd	316,028
CASH EXPENDITURE	-351,362

CASH BALANCE	143,231

Appeal No & title: 01.34/2002 Laos

Period: year 2002

Project(s): PLA000, 005, 160

Currency: CHF

III - Budget analysis / Breakdown of expenditures

Description	APPEAL Budget	CASH Expenditures	KIND & SERVICES		TOTAL Expenditures	Variance
			Goods/services	Personnel		
<u>SUPPLIES</u>						
Shelter & Construction		41			41	-41
Clothing & Textiles		8			8	-8
Food & Seeds						
Water & sanitation		351			351	-351
Medical & First Aid		1,266			1,266	-1,266
Teaching materials		257			257	-257
Utensils & Tools		8			8	-8
Other relief supplies						
Sub-Total		1,932			1,932	-1,932
<u>CAPITAL EXPENSES</u>						
Land & Buildings						
Vehicles						
Computers & Telecom equip.	6,000	4,586			4,586	1,414
Medical equipment						
Other capital expenditures	2,750					2,750
Sub-Total	8,750	4,586			4,586	4,164
<u>TRANSPORT & STORAGE</u>	26,250	22,179			22,179	4,071
Sub-Total	26,250	22,179			22,179	4,071
<u>PERSONNEL</u>						
Personnel (delegates)	117,750	143,710		59,960	203,670	-85,920
Personnel (national staff)	58,982	57,295			57,295	1,687
Sub-Total	176,732	201,006		59,960	260,966	-84,234
<u>GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION</u>						
Assessment/Monitoring/experts	22,750	9,780			9,780	12,970
Travel & related expenses	22,750	25,960			25,960	-3,210
Information expenses	43,750	5,527			5,527	38,223
Admin./general expenses	33,257	35,378			35,378	-2,121
External workshops & Seminars	133,000	3,093			3,093	129,907
Sub-Total	255,507	79,738			79,738	175,769
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>						
Programme management	35,400	23,689			23,689	11,710
Technical services	10,597	7,093			7,093	3,504
Professional services	11,752	7,868			7,868	3,884
Sub-Total	57,749	38,650			38,650	19,098
Operational provisions		3,271			3,271	-3,271
Transfers to National Societies						
TOTAL BUDGET	524,988	351,362		59,960	411,322	113,665