

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

LAO PDR

12 November 2003

Appeal No. 01.62/2003

Appeal Target: CHF 502,472

Programme Update No. 3; Period covered: July to October 2003

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organisation and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal coverage: 55%; for details please refer to the attached list of contributions.

Outstanding needs: CHF 225,895 (USD 167,206 / EUR 146,400)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: N/A

Programme Summary: The second and third phases of The Lao Red Cross (LRC) gender awareness programme were launched during the quarter after the successful first phase had been evaluated. With two months to go, there is now a sense of urgency to finalise the practical operational modalities involved in the new cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) office structure, coordination, and partnership arrangements, now being put in place to replace the Federation delegation when it closes at the end of 2003. Lao Red Cross and its partners are fully engaged in this process and are committed to making this 'new model' of cooperation work effectively.

Good progress with the development of a viable community-based disaster preparedness programme with LRC volunteers has also been made during the quarter, as a result of the 'training of trainers' workshop. HIV/AIDS continues to be in the spotlight with the new OPEC Fund grant enabling the LRC/Australian Red Cross team to expand the scope and outreach of the programme. New Zealand Red Cross has pledged firm support for community-based first aid/water sanitation initiatives, and the Japanese and Nepal Red Cross Societies are also considering support of the programme with plans to send a technical mission to LRC. After meetings in September with the health minister, followed by an extraordinary meeting of the National Blood Transfusion Committee, LRC has been able to present a long-term strategic plan for the blood programme. As a result, it is closer to finding sustainable solutions for long-term funding and support in 2004 and beyond.

Operational developments

During the past four months, the threat from severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) has subsided in Lao PDR. There have, however, been serious outbreaks of dengue fever in a number of provinces. In the first seven months of this year dengue fever claimed more than thirty-six lives, with at least 7,840 people in 18 provinces diagnosed with the fever, and more than 1,740 people contracting the more serious dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF). Five people in Vientiane municipality, twenty-four in Savannekhet and another seven in other provinces have died. The Vientiane Health Department has organised a group to monitor DHF in various districts in Vientiane municipality, and to disseminate information about the mosquito *aedes aegypti*. Villagers have been encouraged by the department to carry out weekly cleaning around their houses, and to empty water containers such as jars, tanks, cans, coconut shells and unused tires.

After two years of research and development and following a roundtable meeting attended by more than 200 Lao and foreign experts, the recently completed National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP) was presented and approved by the Lao National Assembly. The ambitious NPEP programme aims to increase economic growth, halve poverty levels by 2005, and eradicate poverty altogether by 2010. The strategic vision behind the programme is poverty eradication through strong economic growth, and building up the country through integrated development, with an increased focus on the poorest districts. During the past ten years, Laos has already reduced the incidence of poverty from 45 per cent to 30 per cent. This has been achieved through increased investment, more focused efforts, and strong support from partners in development.

Fortunately, there has been no major flooding during this rainy season and no further reported security incidents along Road 13 North (from Vientiane to Luang Prabang).

Health and Care

Goal: LRC establishes an effective, self-sustaining health and care programme, which addresses the critical health needs of the most vulnerable people in Lao PDR.

Objective: The capacity of LRC is strengthened to coordinate, develop and deliver quality health and care services.

Expected Results:

The LRC implements a five-year strategic plan for health and care that complements the society's overall development plan, also incorporating relevant components of the CAS.

Progress/ Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

Blood programme

A meeting with the health minister was held in September to brief him on the urgent situation facing the LRC blood programme and specifically to draw attention to points raised by the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS). The meeting:

- Re-affirmed the government's responsibility for the national blood programme and for the need to provide safe blood throughout the country;
- Re-affirmed the MoH/government appreciation of the achievements on the LRC/JRCS blood programme over the past nine years, particularly in voluntary blood donor recruitment;
- Stated clearly that it was the responsibility of the National Blood Transfusion Committee (NBTC) to give guidance/take decisions on reviewing the national blood policy, reviewing and revising (if necessary) the LRC role in the policy, increasing the cost of one unit of blood to a more realistic level to enable better cost recovery, and approving the proposed LRC blood programme strategy/action plan for 2004-2010.

The NBTC round table meeting, held to discuss blood donation transfusion policy and cost recovery, and to formulate a long-term blood strategy, was attended by the committee comprised of youth, trade unions, the National Committee of Planning Investment, the Ministries of Health, Labor, Education, Information, and Finance, the Central Lao National Front and Reconstruction, and the Lao Red Cross (LRC).

The big challenges for the blood programme are external funding, cost recovery and government support. The meeting agreed that:

1. Lao Red Cross needs to prepare a clear plan and realistic budget figures to demonstrate the need for government support;
2. Lao Red Cross needs to prepare a report from the meeting and submit it to the Prime Minister's Office for consideration;
3. Lao Red Cross needs to disseminate more information to the public on the blood campaign, and especially needs to coordinate more proactively with government organisations; and
4. LRC needs to prepare an official letter and submit it to the government, requesting tax exemption and free access to government media (TV, radio and newspapers) to inform the public regularly about the blood campaign.

Community-based first aid/water and sanitation

A community-based first aid (CBFA) training workshop was conducted for volunteers in Luangnamtha branch attended by twenty volunteers from ten villages. Training of Trainers (ToT) was conducted for the Xayabouly and Vientiane branches, attended by twenty people. A field assessment on epidemics and SARS was carried out in the northern branches to set up a working group.

The LRC headquarters and Vientiane municipality branch coordinated plans for road safety and first aid services at Vientiane Boat Race festival. First aid training courses were organised for NGOs such as Concern Worldwide, Care International, and National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).

The health division has conducted a feasibility study visit in southern branches. The New Zealand Red Cross has pledged new funding and support for CBFA/water sanitation and its head of international department will visit LRC in Vientiane in September, prior to the Hanoi Partnership meeting. The Japanese and Nepal Red Cross Societies will also be sending a technical mission soon to discuss collaboration in water sanitation.

HIV/AIDS

During this quarter, the LRC HIV/AIDS project continued to hold numerous Youth Peer Education and Advocacy workshops. Of note this quarter was the increased support for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Laos, including a Network Capacity Building workshop, exchange visits to Thailand and Cambodia, and the opening of the HIV/AIDS clinic in Bokeo province. This quarter also saw the LRC participate in several international conferences in China, Indonesia and Thailand.

Factors limiting delivery of project services during this quarter have included a reduced ability to travel to remote areas (due to road access problems in the rainy season) and some general staffing issues.

Impact

Programmes are still in progress, and impact will not be apparent until a later stage.

Constraints

Seasonal travel difficulties and some staffing problems were encountered by the HIV/AIDS programme. Government support for the blood programme will start in 2005, not in 2004 as hoped.

Disaster Management

Goal: The impact of disasters on the most vulnerable people in Laos is reduced.

Objective: The capacity of the LRC to help to reduce the loss of live and livelihood of the most vulnerable people resulting from the most frequent disasters is strengthened.

Expected Results:

The programme is based on three key projects that will have the following overall results:

1. The capability of the LRC at the different levels to respond to the most frequent disasters (i.e. village fires, flooding, flash floods and drought) is enhanced by the end of 2004.
2. The disaster preparedness activities undertaken by the LRC are developed with clear linkages to the state system by the end of 2004.
3. The LRC plays an active role within a local, regional and global network in disaster management.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

In June, ToT in participatory methodology and contingency planning (CP) workshops were held by LRC with support from the regional disaster management unit in Vientiane. Field trips were also made to the southern provinces of Savannakhet and Attapeu to gather information for a hazard mapping exercise. In August the LRC participated in the sixth Southeast Asia regional disaster management committee in Bangkok, Thailand.

Three regional warehouses have been restocked and new computerised control system is fully operational in readiness for potential flooding and flood relief operations during the present rainy season.

A community based disaster preparedness (CBDP) study visit was organised in Cambodia in September, focused on the most flood-prone areas. The team consisted of: two DP staff from headquarters, one from the branch and one DP officer from the Federation.

Impact

Valuable information and experience was gained by LRC as a result of the CP workshop and ToT training in participatory methodology, which will enable LRC to start developing its disaster preparedness volunteer network and capacities at the community level. Community-based disaster preparedness/CBDM volunteers training will be held in Khammuane and Sannakhet in November.

Good experience was gained of CBDP/CBDM during the study visit to Cambodia and trips to flood prone areas. Of particular interest were the practical ways in which villagers cope with hazards and natural disasters by using flood early warning system, with support of the American Red Cross through CRC (which will be extended to Lao PDR in 2005).

Constraints

A demanding travel schedule meant that the head of division was away from the office for much of the time. This led to delays and postponements of activities.

Organisational Development

Goal: The capacity of the LRC is strengthened, with particular focus on the fields of human resource and finance systems development, so that it is better able to carry out its humanitarian mandate.

Objective: The foundations of good governance are laid and the LRC's overall management capacity developed in line with its stated aim of becoming a well functioning national society by 2010.

Expected Results

The programme is based on two key projects that will have the following overall results:

1. The LRC's annual planning process is strengthened and institutionalised to ensure implementation of the Society's five-year development plan.
2. The foundations are laid for good governance practices and the related decrees, regulations and procedures are revised and adopted by LRC.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

Phase one of the gender project has been completed and phase two - organised by the LRC gender group - has now started. A long term plan has been drawn up for a gender mainstreaming programme for the national society.

The LRC fund raising plan has been completed with the support of Thai Red Cross, and is now being implemented. The fund raising division has been restructured and the municipality branch office has agreed to implement fund raising activities. Advisors from headquarters, the Federation's fund raising division and Vientiane municipality have worked together to produce a fund raising plan (selling clothes from LRC shop, boat race/first aid, lucky ball and so on). A fund raising committee is being established by the municipality branch.

National society statutes have been revised in French by LRC and will now be reviewed by the Federation and ICRC. The fund raising policy and Decree 36 still require further revision before they can be approved by the Government.

The LRC information and fund raising division and ICRC held a dissemination ToT workshop in Thalat, Vientiane province, with the aim of enhancing the dissemination skills of branch information officers.

Vientiane municipality branch is taking a leading role in road safety. A road safety meeting was held with Handicap and the National Road Safety Committee.

The LRC CAS officer and the Federation programme officer attended the regional OD forum and project planning process (PPP) training in Bangkok in August for sharing information in the region.

The annual planning process for 2004 has begun and is being coordinated by the LRC headquarters planning and monitoring unit in close collaboration with the branches, the Federation and partner national societies. Capacity building for LRC headquarters staff is continuing with training in project planning and monitoring, computer skills, English language and report writing. This includes induction training for CAS office staff.

Impact

Programmes are still in progress, and impacts will not be apparent until a later stage.

Constraints

None have been encountered during the quarter.

Federation Coordination

Goal: Sustainable long-term development of the LRC is achieved through facilitating strong and effective coordination between LRC partners.

Objective: Solid coordination and collaborative practices are put in place, enabling all partners to assist LRC to implement the current five-year development plan to 2005 and its successor.

Expected Result

A fully inclusive and well coordinated CAS is implemented which supports the LRC national plan and strategy and is accepted by all partners.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

Good progress continues to be made with the CAS process. A comprehensive draft project document describing the composition, role, function, staffing, and management/supervisory arrangements, budget, work plan and job descriptions for the CAS office has been prepared and discussed with all the partners. This was reviewed during a meeting in September in Vientiane at which all the key partners participated, including the regional head of regional delegation and the senior CAS/cooperation officer from Geneva. Priority now is to resolve all outstanding issues to ensure that the CAS office may be formally established in January 2004.

The Federation delegation has also played an important role in supporting LRC to coordinate with the Ministry of Health, members of the National Blood Transfusion Committee, the World Health Organisation (WHO), Southeast Asia regional health unit and other concerned organisations in respect of developing the new strategy and action plan for the 2004–2010 blood programme, as well as advocating for more support. As a result, a meeting was held with the minister of health, followed by an extraordinary session of the NBTC, during which the case was clearly made for more support from government and other donors for the programme. Due recognition was given to the vital national service provided by the LRC blood programme.

The Federation delegation continues to strengthen coordination between LRC and its key partners at all levels around the CAS process, while at the same time developing good practical working relations with the donor community in Laos, in particular the UN system, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, AusAid, British Trade Office and SIDA (see 'International Representation'). The following table is a summary of the activities of key partner national societies:

PNS	Activities (July – October 2003)
Australian	Australian Red Cross (ARC) continues to support a comprehensive HIV/AIDS programme in the country. The OPEC Fund grant has enabled LRC/ARC/Federation to expand the scope of the programme in 2003 - with additional capacity building available for the LRC headquarters information and fundraising division. Various activities have been organised to work towards the objectives of changing attitudes and behaviour, preventing further infection, providing community-based care and improving coordination with public authorities and other organisations.
Danish	Danish Red Cross (DRC) supports an integrated programme of primary health care in three northern provinces (Xiengkouang, Pongsali, Huaphan). DRC also provides significant support for LRC capacity building at the national level as well as to the Lao delegation. DRC have signed MoU with LRC on Phase II of the CAS.
French	French Red Cross supports CBFA, water sanitation, and branch development activities in two branches (Vientiane and Sayaboury). EU funding for the water sanitation programme has started and a new representative arrived in early October.
Japanese	Japanese Red Cross (JRCS) will continue support the blood programme, through the Federation, up to the end of 2003. JRCS has also made a significant contribution to disaster preparedness activities in the country. Following meetings in September with the minister of health, followed by an extraordinary meeting of the National Blood Transfusion Committee, LRC has been able to present a long-term strategic plan for the blood programme and as a result is closer to finding sustainable solutions for long term funding and support in 2004 and beyond.
Netherlands	The delegate together with the liaison officer have produced a project proposal for a further 16-month period, and submitted it to the Netherlands. This will be funded by the Dutch Government (TMF). The present MoU will be extended until April 2004. As soon as the project document is approved by the Netherlands, the new MoU will be submitted to the LRC secretary general and then sent to the head office in the Hague.
Swiss	Swiss Red Cross/LRC Luang Prabang branch provided assistance in the form of family kits to resettle 120 families in four villages in Luang Prabang province.

Impact

Concerted advocacy and coordination by LRC and the Federation have helped to make a strong case for more government and new donor support for the blood programme in 2004.

Constraints

None have been encountered during the quarter

International Representation

Goal: Decision makers and influencers in Lao PDR are aware of and sympathetic to the work of the Red Cross Red Crescent on behalf of the vulnerable.

Objective: The LRC and its CAS partners are positioned to influence the humanitarian agenda in Lao PDR and to mobilise resources.

Expected Results

The policies, strategies and programmes of LRC and its CAS partners are advocated to and understood by the country's government and civil society.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

The Federation attended a number of official functions and engagements including celebrations for the national days of Japan, the Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and Germany, and those to mark UN Day, UNICEF's thirty years in Lao PDR, and World Food Day. Furthermore, meetings were held with UNICEF, UNDCF, WFP, and WHO to discuss the work of the Movement in Lao PDR and gain support for LRC programmes.

The Federation also participated in the NPEP roundtable in September at which the programme was presented to the international donor community, prior to its approval by the National Assembly. As mentioned in the previous programme update, it is envisaged that dissemination and awareness raising sessions for high ranking government officials as well as the international donor and diplomatic community (run together with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), will be inaugurated at a function hosted by the German ambassador by December 2003.

Impact

As a result of efforts made by the Federation with international representation, the work of the Movement is gradually becoming better known and appreciated, which in turn helps to raise the profile of the LRC in Lao society.

Constraints

None have been experienced during the quarter.

For further information please contact:

In Vientiane: Nick Russell, Federation Representative, Phone: +856 21 215762; Fax: +856 21 215935; e-mail: laoifrc1@laotel.com

In Bangkok: Juergen Weyand, Head of Regional Delegation; Phone: + 662 640 8211 and Fax: + 662 640 8220

In Geneva: Charles Evans/Sandra Rosner, Southeast Asia Desk, Phone: +41 22 730 4320/4456, Fax: +41 22 733 0395, e-mail: Charles.Evans@ifrc.org/Sandra.Rosner@ifrc.org

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 (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

APPEAL No. 01.62/2003

PLEDGES RECEIVED

05/11/03

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				502,473	TOTAL COVERAGE 92.2%	
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				143,231		
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT		15,000	AUD	13,575	27.07.03	HIV PHASE 4
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID(04)				80,000	24.02.03	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID(04)				20,000	24.02.03	DEVELOPMENT
DANISH - GOVT				49,583	28.05.03	FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE
JAPANESE RC		11,970	USD	16,171	04.07.03	BLOOD PROGRAMME
NEW ZEALAND - RC		100,000	NZD	80,850	19.09.03	WATSAN
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				403,410	CHF	80.3%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
DENMARK	DELEGATE(S)			59,959		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				59,959	CHF	11.9%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

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