

# 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

## LAOS PDR

18 May 2004

### In Brief

Appeal No. 01.62/03; Appeal target: CHF 502,472 (USD 343,814 or EUR 345,353); Appeal coverage: 118%.

[\(click here to go directly to the Financial Report\).](#)

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### Overall analysis of the programme

Organisational development (OD) and capacity building, integrated with a strong humanitarian values component, remain the focus of the Federation's work in Lao PDR. At the Lao Red Cross (LRC) headquarters emphasis continues to centre on equipping LRC staff with a range of management skills as well as on the development of a sustainable human and financial resources policy and plan. Providing support for disaster preparedness (DP), HIV/AIDS and the blood programme have also been Federation priorities in 2003. Together with its partners, the LRC is committed to building strong alliances around an inclusive Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS) using the LRC five-year development plan and annual plan as foundations. An integral part of the OD and capacity building process, the CAS was formally endorsed by the LRC and its key partners in September 2002. The LRC CAS coordination and partnership office was established in January 2004 after the closure of the delegation on 31 December 2003.

During the past year, steady progress continues to be made in OD, disaster preparedness (DP), HIV/AIDS, communications and dissemination, as well as in some other areas of the health programme, thereby consolidating achievements made in the past two years. A major challenge exists in terms of securing long-term funding which will ensure a sustainable future for the LRC blood programme.

With branches established in every province of the country, the LRC has focussed during the year on building its management capabilities at headquarters and across the branch network. It is in the process of implementing a comprehensive human resource development strategy that concentrates (in a first phase) on fundraising and will then turn more to the human resources aspect. The implementation plan draws extensively on the experiences and

successes of the LRC branches. These strategy and action plans also cover training in project management, finance, warehouse management and stock control and have all been successfully carried out in 2003.

Other priorities during the year have included support for the annual planning process including: training in project monitoring for key staff; expansion of dissemination activities with ICRC, assisting the information/fundraising division begin the implementation of their first 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 LRC was virtually re-created in 1992. By mid 2000 it had established branches in every province, most of them active in core Red Cross activities. Over the past eleven years, growth has been supported by a number of PNS, ICRC and the Federation. However by May 2000, at a Federation partnership meeting in Bangkok, it was apparent that a 'harmonisation' process was required at the LRC to consolidate what had become a rather disparate programme - different models of development embraced by different branches, each driven by donor/partner interests. One model was considered necessary in order to develop the LRC as a whole.

The Bangkok meeting concluded with an agreement to review the LRC position and to assist the national society with preparation of a five year development plan. Recommendations also included the drafting of a CAS to which all partners would be expected to adhere in the future, under the leadership of the LRC. In November, 2000 a Federation sponsored OD/governance workshop set the strategic direction and priorities for the current OD programme. In July 2001, the Danish Red Cross Society sponsored a new Federation representative to build on the momentum achieved during the first six months of that year.

A priority of the Federation has been to assist the LRC foster a clearer understanding of the annual planning process, which is founded on the LRC five year development plan, both at headquarters and branch level. This has been achieved through a series of regional and national planning and review meetings, supported by regular informal consultations between all partners. The LRC produces annual workplans based on the society's five year development plan, to which all the CAS partners are fully committed. LRC managers receive regular training in project management, planning and monitoring including the project planning process (PPP).

Contributions from the German Red Cross Society and the Swiss and British governments have provided the Federation with the necessary resources to support, facilitate and develop the OD/capacity building programme from 2001 to date. The DP programme has been supported with funds carried over from the 2000 floods appeal. The Japanese Red Cross Society has supported the LRC blood programme for the past nine years through 2003. The Australian and Norwegian Red Cross Societies continue to support the well established HIV/AIDS programme and the New Zealand Red Cross Society has started to fund community-based first aid/water and sanitation (watsan) activities in 2004.

The Federation's overall role in Lao PDR, primarily as a facilitator has been well established. A challenge for the Southeast Asia regional delegation during 2004 and beyond is to convince partners of the CAS office's value in facilitating the development process; coordinating external resources and providing technical support to the OD and capacity building programme. Under the CAS arrangement, 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**

Of increasing priority to the OD programme is equipping staff at LRC headquarters with skills necessary to directly support branches. Also vital 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 the LRC 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 of 2003 has helped address these needs but the pace is slow and requires long-term support by LRC partners.

Given the political system in Lao PDR, as well as the country's multi-ethnic and cultural diversity, the key to successful development of the LRC 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' or more operational delegation to a Federation/CAS support office in 2003 seeks to address the issue in an affordable and appropriate manner. Like the CAS, the overall strategy is based on the coordinated implementation of core programmes by the LRC and its partners. OD and capacity building is central to this approach.

With the signing of a CAS in September 2002, the LRC and its partners committed to building strong partnerships around the precepts of this document and the society's development plan as follows:

- Coordination of external assistance and linkages between the LRC and its key (as well as new) partners, government bodies, international donor community, etc;
- Addressing the key tasks appended to the CAS MoU, including the establishment of systems for more streamlined and transparent financial monitoring, quality narrative reporting and programme monitoring;
- Generating a range of coordination, facilitation, reporting and support services for the LRC and its partners to ensure the efficient and effective management of the CAS.

A project proposal and supporting annexes, which were the subject of a comprehensive consultation process between the LRC and partners over the final months of 2003, embodies the practical operational modalities for establishing the CAS office with the necessary mechanisms for the effective and efficient management of the CAS in 2004. The office will be part of LRC headquarters from the outset and as such will not be a separate legal entity; nor is it a scaled down Federation delegation under a different name.

In line with the LRC's vision of becoming a well functioning national society (WFNS) by 2010, the LRC's ultimate goal is to integrate the CAS office within the external cooperation/coordination and planning division in the headquarters organisational structure. Therefore, the office will, in effect, be an interim measure between the phasing out of the Federation's delegation and the LRC assuming overall responsibility for implementing the CAS and, as appropriate, the former core Federation national staff who work for the office after the delegation closes.

One of the primary tasks of the CAS office and the CAS committee will be to build up the capacity of the LRC headquarters staff. Thus they will have a key capacity building role, through the steps and activities indicated in the CAS office workplan, in enabling the LRC to achieve its goal of becoming a WFNS.

The CAS office is a pragmatic interim measure or stepping stone, actively supported by LRC's CAS partners, which will permit LRC staff to develop the necessary management, coordination, planning, reporting and monitoring capacities, skills and experience to achieve their goal. It is envisaged that a clear timetable for achieving the project goal will be set during the course of the first experimental year of operations.

### **Outstanding needs**

The immediate outstanding need in the 2004 Appeal is to ensure that the OD programme is funded as per the regional delegation's funding plan for support to the LRC OD programme.

### **Future challenges**

With the closure of the Lao country office, the Federation's support for the LRC will continue through the work of the regional delegation's technical units and the focal point for Lao, who will be responsible for following up and supporting the newly established CAS office and providing a range of services connected to management of the CAS, to the LRC and its partners. The main challenges facing the Federation, the LRC and the CAS partners will be to:

- secure the necessary funding to both consolidate the achievements to date as well as to develop the core in the LRC's five year development plan areas of OD, health, disaster management (DM), HIV/AIDS and the blood programme;
- ensure the effective implementation of the LRC fundraising policy and plan in order to permit, through improved fundraising and generation of own resources, the LRC to pay much needed incentives to its staff which will in turn encourage increased motivation, leading to enhanced performance;
- ensure that the newly established CAS office functions efficiently in order to provide the required coordination, reporting and facilitation services to the CAS partnerships.

## Health and Care

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

**Programme Objective: To strengthen the capacity of the LRC 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, and incorporates relevant components of the CAS.

### Achievements

#### *Blood programme*

A meeting with the Minister of Health was held in September. The purpose of the meeting was to brief the Minister on the urgent situation facing the LRC blood programme and specifically to draw his attention to the points raised by JRCS. The meeting:

- reaffirmed the government's responsibility for the national blood programme and for the need to provide safe blood throughout the country;
- reaffirmed the government's appreciation of the achievements of the LRC/JRCS blood programme over the past nine years, particularly in the field of voluntary blood donor recruitment;
- stated clearly that it was the responsibility of the NBTC to give guidance/take decisions on reviewing the national blood policy, reviewing and revising (if necessary) the LRC's role in the national blood 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's strategy/action plan for 2004-2010.

The National Blood Transfusion Committee roundtable meeting was held and attended by its members comprising youth and trade union representatives, National Committee of Planning Investment, personnel from the Ministries of Health, Labor, Education, Information and Finance, Central Lao National Front & Reconstruction, and the LRC. The meeting was held to discuss blood donation transfusion policy and cost recovery and to formulate a long-term blood strategy. The major challenges for the blood programme are external funding, cost recovery and government support. The meeting agreed that the LRC needs to:

- prepare a clear plan and realistic budget figures to demonstrate the need for government support;
- prepare a report from the meeting and submit it to the Prime Minister's office for consideration;
- disseminate more information to the public on the blood campaign, and especially needs to coordinate more proactively with government organisations;
- 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. Twenty volunteers from ten villages attended the workshop. Training-of-trainers (ToT) was conducted for the Xayabouly and Vientiane branches. Twenty trainers attended.

A field assessment on epidemics and SARS was carried out in the northern branches to set up a working group. LRC headquarters and Vientiane municipality branch coordinated their plans for road safety and first aid services at the Vientiane boat race festival. First aid training courses were organised for NGOs such as Concern Worldwide, Care International, and the National Disaster Management Office. The health division has conducted a feasibility study visit in southern branches.

The New Zealand Red Cross Society has pledged new funding and support for CBFA/watsan and their Head of International Department will visit the LRC in Vientiane at the end of September prior to the Hanoi Partnership Meeting. The Japanese and Nepalese Red Cross Societies will also be sending a technical mission soon to discuss collaboration in watsan.

### *HIV/AIDS programme*

The LRC HIV/AIDS project continued to hold numerous Youth Peer Education and Advocacy workshops. Of note was the increased support for people living with HIV/AIDS 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. The LRC also participated in several international conferences in China, Indonesia and Thailand.

Factors limiting delivery of project services 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**

These programmes are still in progress and sustainable 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**

**Overall Goal: To reduce the impact of disasters on the most vulnerable people in Laos.**

**Programme Objective: To strengthen the capacity of the LRC to help reduce the loss of lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable people resulting from the most frequent disasters.**

### **Expected Results**

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

1. The capability of the LRC at 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 DP 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.

## Achievements

In June, ToT courses in participatory methodology and contingency planning workshops were held by the 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.

The LRC participated in the sixth Southeast Asia Regional Disaster Management Committee meeting, held from 14 to 16 August, 2003 in Bangkok. Three regional warehouses have been restocked and a 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 from 9 to 14 September, 2003, focusing 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 IFRC.

## Impact

Valuable information and experience was gained by the LRC as a result of the contingency planning workshop and ToT training in participatory methodology. This will enable the LRC to start developing its DP volunteer network and capacities at the community level. Community-based disaster preparedness and management volunteers' training will be held in Khammuane and Sannakhet in November.

Good experience was gained of community-based disaster preparedness and management during the study visit to Cambodia and trips to the flood-prone areas. Of particular interest were the practical ways villagers cope with hazards and natural disasters by using flood early warning systems, with support from the American Red Cross Society through the Mekong River Commission (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

**Overall Goal: To strengthen the capacity of the LRC, with particular focus on the fields of human resources and finance systems development, so that it is better able to carry out its humanitarian mandate.**

**Programme Objective: To lay the foundations of good governance and to develop the LRC's overall management capacity 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 the LRC.

## Achievements

The gender phases 1, 2 and 3 have been completed. These activities are being organised by the LRC gender group with support from the Federation. A long-term plan has been drawn up for a gender mainstreaming programme for the national society. An evaluation of the first three phases will be carried out at the beginning of 2004.

The LRC fundraising plan has been completed with the support of the Thai Red Cross Society and is now being implemented. Successful fundraising events have been organised around the boat races and That Luang festivals in October and November as well as around World AIDS Day in December.

The LRC OD and CAS officers, together with the Federation programme officer, attended the regional OD fora in Bangkok and Sem Reap, Project Planning Process training in Bangkok and a reporting workshop in Kuala Lumpur during the period.

The national society statutes have been revised in French by the LRC and will now be reviewed by the Federation and ICRC. The fundraising policy still requires further revision before it can be approved by the government but it is hoped that this will not take too long.

The LRC Statutes Decree No. 36 and the fundraising policy continue to be revised, awaiting Approval. The fundraising division has been restructured. The municipality branch office has agreed to take the lead role in implementing fundraising activities in Vientiane. Initiatives include selling clothes from the Red Cross shop, boat race/first aid, lucky ball, business sponsorship, a lottery in 2004, etc). A fundraising committee has been established by the municipality branch with the active support of the Governor of Vientiane.

The LRC headquarters and the municipality branch are also taking a lead role in road safety as a key player in the National Road Safety Committee. Regular planning and information meetings are held with members including UNICEF, Handicap International, and the Ministry of Communications and Transport. The LRC has formulated a programme of youth peer group education linked to first aid and the volunteer programme which has been kick-started with support from the Federation. The aim is to seek funds from the Global Road Safety Fund and other donors to continue to develop this all important programme in 2004.

The LRC information and fundraising division and the ICRC held a dissemination ToT workshop in Thalat, Vientiane province, with the aim of enhancing the dissemination skills of branch information officers. The ICRC and the Federation have good collaboration in all aspects of dissemination and communication. This has led to an initiative by the German Ambassador to host a function for high ranking government officials, the diplomatic community and international donor organisations in Lao PDR in order to promote a better understanding of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and raise the profile of the LRC in particular.

The annual planning process for 2004 is well advanced and is being coordinated by the LRC headquarters planning and monitoring unit in close collaboration with the branches, the Federation and PNS. 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.

With the closure of the Lao country office, the Federation's regional delegation OD unit will take over responsibility for providing support to the LRC OD programme in 2004 and beyond.

## **Impact**

Steady progress has been made overall, specifically with the annual planning process, gender and youth/road safety activities. As a result of the English language training, LRC staff and senior management are gradually enhancing their skills in speaking, reading and writing. The gender workshops have led to a basic understanding of the issue with senior management.

## **Constraints**

None have been encountered.

## **Federation Coordination**

**Overall Goal: To achieve sustainable long-term development of the LRC through facilitating strong and effective coordination between LRC partners.**

**Programme Objective: To put in place solid coordination and collaborative practices, enabling all partners to assist the 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's national plan and strategy and is accepted by all partners.

### **Achievements**

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, workplan and job descriptions for the CAS office, has been prepared and discussed with all the partners. This was reviewed during a meeting on 4 September 2003 in Vientiane, in which all the key partners participated including the Head of Regional Delegation, Bangkok, and the senior CAS/cooperation officer from Geneva. The 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 the LRC to coordinate with the Ministry of Health, members of the National Blood Transfusion Committee, WHO regional health unit Bangkok and other concerned organisations in respect of developing the new strategy and action plan for the blood programme 2004–2010 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 National Blood Transfusion Committee at which the case was clearly made for more support from government and other donors for the LRC blood programme, and due recognition was given to the vital national service provided by the LRC blood programme.

The Federation delegation continues to strengthen coordination between the 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 also International Representation).

### **Impact**

Concerted advocacy and coordination by the 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.

## **International Representation**

**Overall Goal: To raise awareness among decision makers and influencers in Lao PDR so that they are sympathetic to the work of the Red Cross Red Crescent on behalf of the vulnerable .**

**Programme 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 the LRC and its CAS partners are advocated to and understood by the country's government and civil society.

### **Achievements**

The Federation attended a number of official functions and engagements including:

- celebrations for the National Days of Japan, Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and Germany;
- celebrations to mark UN Day, UNICEF's thirty years in Lao PDR, and World Food Day;
- meetings with UNICEF, UNDCF, WFP, WHO to discuss the work of the Movement in Lao PDR and gain support for the programmes of the LRC.

The Federation also participated in the 8th NPEP roundtable in September at which the National Poverty Eradication Programme was presented to the international donor community prior to its approval by Fourth Plenary Session of the Fifth National Assembly. It is envisaged that dissemination and awareness raising sessions for high ranking government officials and the international donor and diplomatic community, to be run with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will be inaugurated at a function hosted by the German Ambassador before Christmas.

### **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.

### **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 the LRC achieve its goal of becoming a WFNS. This has been underpinned by the CAS to which the LRC and its partners are fully committed. The Lao delegation, in consultation with the LRC and its partners, has implemented its strategy of phasing out the Federation delegation to a CAS coordination and support office. Through this innovative model it will endeavour to provide a range of cost effective services which meet the needs of the LRC and its partners.

Since 2001, funding provided by the Swiss government and the German Red Cross Society 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 continue to fund the small disaster preparedness programme. The main priority now is to secure continued support for 2004 from DFID for OD/capacity building to develop the work in process. New funding from the New Zealand Red Cross Society has

been secured for watsan, but long-term funding for the blood programme has yet to be found. This is a major cause for concern for LRC.

*Appeal budget.* The Federation Secretariat's 2003 appeal budget (CHF 502,472) includes a contribution of some CHF 120,000 received from OPEC in November 2002 for HIV/AIDS activities in Laos. However, this project and income received was transferred to the Australian Red Cross, which directly implemented the tasks with the Lao Red Cross. Therefore in real terms, the total income (contributions from donors and cash brought forward from 2002) and cash expenditure (320,512 CHF) in 2003 align with the 'practical' budget. ie less the 'pass-through' funds.