

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

VIET NAM

2 June 2004

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 181 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

[Appeal No. 01.66/2004](#); Programme Update No. 1; Period covered: January to March 2004.

While the Federation Secretariat currently retains a representative office in Vietnam, there is no formal Appeal for 2004 mainly due to uncertainties over the future of this office, including its role and capacity to support the Red Cross of Viet Nam in the utilisation of additional funds and therefore the country activities are covered under the Southeast Asia regional appeal.

Programme summary: This annex summarises the achievements of the Federation supported Red Cross of Viet Nam (RCV) programmes for the period January-March 2004. During a five-month period in 2003 when the Federation office in Viet Nam was without an office head, there was a slowdown in programme implementation. The RCV was also experiencing changes in its top management as well as some reorganisation at headquarters. Consequently all plans for 2003 that could not be carried out by the end of the year were brought forward into the first quarter of 2004 for completion. The Federation's new representative in Viet Nam, who will take up office by the second quarter, will develop future plans for the Federation in Viet Nam. Priority areas, as earlier agreed with the RCV, would be supporting organisational development and facilitating coordination with its partners.

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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. 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>

Health and Care

Since 1996, the RCV has implementing a community-based social welfare programme aimed at building capacity at community level and at responding to the social welfare needs of vulnerable people. In 2003, new partners stepped in to support the society's social work activities and Federation support was scheduled to be withdrawn by the end of the year. However, working with several partners stretched the capacity of the RCV and some activities were delayed and carried forward into the 1st quarter of 2004. These activities included:

- *Final programme evaluation* – The evaluation was headed by an external consultant and consisted of document reviews, interviews, field trips and review seminars. The evaluation report is currently under preparation.
- *Social welfare best practice manual* – The social welfare department organised a workshop to collect and document best practices and developed a manual. Copies (4,230) of the manual have been printed for distribution to branches and chapters throughout the country.
- *Social welfare manual* – The second edition of the social welfare manual for grass roots Red Cross volunteers was edited and printed. The manual is a guide book for volunteers.
- *Staff training* – Key staff from the social welfare department participated in professional training courses on project management and negotiation skills.
- *Documentation* – A video tape 'model of elderly care and support in Thuy Nguyen, Hai Phong' was produced and translated into English.

Implementation of HIV/AIDS activities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City continued throughout the 1st quarter of 2004 with support from the Australian Red Cross Society. Negotiations between the RCV and the Australian Red Cross Society regarding management and utilisation of OPEC funds to expand the existing programme reached a stalemate in March. By the end of the 1st quarter it was decided to initiate the programme expansion with support directly from the regional health unit in Bangkok. The budget was revised and reduced to match the remaining time for implementation and the limited capacity of the RCV's health department.

Disaster Management

In the 1st quarter, disaster management (DM) staff in the Viet Nam country office continued to work with the RCV on projects identified below. When necessary, the staff drew on the expertise of the regional disaster management unit in Bangkok.

Mangrove project

With support from the Federation DM officer, project staff from the RCV headquarters (management board and working group) and local levels (provincial, district and commune project management boards) completed the preparation of plans of action and budgets for 2004 in all six provinces of the project. New models in planning and financial and performance reporting systems were applied in all six provinces after accountants received two days training.

Regular project activities (such as selecting new areas for plantation, training in planting techniques, building or repairing sign boards for mangrove protection) were implemented as planned with timely funds transfer from headquarters.

In addition, national headquarter's management board was consulted and advised on dissemination activities through *Humanity Magazine* and the *Voice of Viet Nam* radio. The film *Green Wall* was broadcast on national TV in March. It outlines the importance of the mangrove forests protecting coastal communities and sea dykes. Further, students from the Japanese Red Cross Society international nursing school made a learning visit to the RCV and visited a project site in Ha Tinh province.

Risk reduction projects funded by British Red Cross Society

The RCV completed construction of small rural bridges in the provinces of Dong Thap and Long An (see images below) and introduced a water supply system for people in An Giang province. In Dong Thap and Long An, more than 100 people use the two bridges everyday to reach the fields and go to schools. In total, 200 households in An Giang now have access to safe water. A rescue boat was also constructed and is on trial in An Giang.

Windbreak trees planted in Long An in 2003 are growing well. People in Long An have since planted hundreds of hectares more of the same type of trees.

DFID funded project (introduction of disaster preparedness to primary school teachers and children)

In schools in Quang Tri, Hue, Da Nang and An Giang, children were taught by their teachers about disaster preparedness during weekends and in general knowledge classes. In total, over 63,000 children have been trained and are capable of applying and spreading knowledge on disaster preparedness to their parents and friends. In addition, a consultant of the regional disaster management unit in Bangkok undertook an assessment on disaster risk in the urban areas of Da Nang city in cooperation with the RCV.

DIPECHO funded project (community-based disaster reduction)

Due to staff changes in both the Federation and the RCV in late 2003, project activities were not fully implemented as planned for in the first part of the quarter. However, with support from the regional disaster management unit, the situation improved. Staff are aiming to complete as much of the project within the project time frame:

- Three flood-prone provinces in the north of Viet Nam were equipped with sirens and amplifiers for early warning in cooperation with the Disaster Management Centre (Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control).
- Megaphones were procured and distributed to the Red Cross shock brigades in disaster-prone provinces. These are used to alert people in high risk areas of hazards, what should be done to prepare for disasters, evacuation routes, etc.
- The RCV trained its project staff at headquarters and in the provinces. The emphasis of the training was community organising and guidelines to improve hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessments. Following this, Red Cross staff met school teachers to discuss their involvement in disaster mitigation activities in high-risk communes. They submitted small project proposals to RCV national headquarters. Funds transfer for approved proposals is expected by the end of April.

- Discussions and meetings between the RCV and the Federation delegation, with different partners, on the implementation of other activities took place.

Minor emergency

The RCV completed distribution of rice and household kits, with support from the Swiss and Norwegian Red Cross Societies. Water filters kits (2,000) were distributed to households affected by floods in Phu Yen and Ninh Thuan, with support from New Zealand Red Cross Society.

Sphere

The RCV, Federation delegation and Oxfam GB coordinated the translation and printing of the *Sphere* handbook into Vietnamese. Funds for this came from Oxfam GB and from other international NGOs. The 2,000 copies will be used for training courses on *Sphere* for promoting these international standards.

DM coordination and cooperation with partner national societies and external organisations

Due to its presence in provinces and information shared at different for a, the general public has a wider understanding of the RCV DM programme. RCV cooperation with government agencies has strengthened, especially with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development – the largest ministry in Viet Nam. The DM officer also shares information on projects and seeks technical advice when necessary from other Red Cross partners.

Humanitarian Values

The different departments of the RCV have an information role for which they have varying levels of funding, staffing and skills. The society's publication, *Humanity Magazine*, for example, receives some funding from the RCV but also has to raise money by printing material from other agencies, including other humanitarian agencies. A particular success for the magazine during the quarter was the story on mangroves planted along Viet Nam's eastern coast. The magazine is a mass audience publication.

Organisational Development

In the 1st quarter, the RCV made significant progress with developing its national strategy. Headquarters held two strategic planning workshops - one with provincial chapters in the north and the other in the south of Viet Nam. Partner national society (PNS) representatives also took part in these workshops, which were facilitated by a Federation organisational development (OD) staff member from Cambodia. Participants analysed sectors of health and social welfare, DM, fundraising and OD, and came up with recommendations for improvement. A follow-up workshop is scheduled for the next quarter.

The Federation also planned for the leadership of the RCV to visit counterparts in the Geneva Secretariat and national societies in the region to discuss and exchange experiences in strategy development. The trips are intended for later in the year.

Staff from RCV headquarters and a Federation national staff member trained accountants from 43 provincial chapters during the quarter. The training – a continuation of financial systems development in 2003 – was positively received by the branches. Encouraged by the positive feedback, senior officers at headquarters further re-emphasized their commitment for finance development. These achievements took place in the absence of the finance delegate, who was on

leave at the time. The delegate returned to Viet Nam towards the end of the period with the additional responsibilities of finance development in other countries in the region.

Coordination and Implementation

During her four-month term, the interim head of the Federation office in Viet Nam addressed several pending issues of office and programme management and delineated responsibilities between national staff. Therefore staff members were well briefed when the delegate completed her mission, and they continued to manage the office and programmes during the quarter. This restructuring was an essential achievement that followed a period of no head of office and reductions in staff in 2003.

In parallel, the Secretariat opened a position for a Federation representative in Viet Nam. The selected candidate, who was also accepted by the leadership of the RCV, will take up office in May.

The Federation staff interacted with PNS counterparts whenever necessary and every month to share information and common interests in programmes. In February, senior managers of the RCV, Federation and PNS in Viet Nam held their quarterly information sharing meeting.