

Report 2006-2007



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Mongolia

Appeal No. MAAMN001

3 April 2008

This report covers the period of 01/01/06 to 31/12/07 of a two-year planning and appeal process.



Youth volunteers of the Mongolian Red Cross Society, dressed up as "Winter grandfather", distributed New Year / Christmas gifts to street-children and poor children in Ulaanbaatar and to inmates of the State Children's penitentiary. MRCS

In brief

Programme summary: The eight core programmes of the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) have been scaling up their efforts while expanding their network of both international and local partners as well as extending the national society's humanitarian network across Mongolia. Partnerships with key groups such as herders, migrants, youths, national health agencies and the media have helped move the MRCS towards a more community-based approach, allowing its activities to be more needs based and effective. Recognition of the importance of volunteers, with the gradual development of a new volunteer policy and renewed trainings on volunteer management, are also helping the MRCS to strengthen its network and with it the impact of its programmes.

Key achievements over the past two years included the hay project and capacity building of the regional disaster capacity centres, and the introduction of a new community-based first aid curricula and a strengthening of branch first aid clubs.

The participation of over 850 volunteers in providing home care and organizing community mobilization activities involving over 2,550 vulnerable families; and the rapid expansion of HIV response to reach more groups such as men who have sex with men, prisoners, migrants, youths, and sex workers, as well as the scaling up of campaigns such as World AIDS Day, which in 2007 reached over 19,000 people directly contributed to these achievements.

Other successes include the expansion of the Youth Donor 25 clubs across Ulaanbaatar along with the establishment of a donor registration database and donor service club; the successful piloting of the avian influenza preparedness project, which in one year has already trained over 242 volunteers who are now carrying out community-based campaigns in five provinces; the renewal of the financial management system with new software and new procedures, as well as the development of a volunteer policy and better management system through the organizational development programme. The humanitarian values programme's also successfully linked with the media to increase the past

two years' coverage of all programme successes and information dissemination campaigns.

Financial situation: The total 2006-2007 budget was CHF 2.29 million (USD 2.05 million or EUR 1.38 million), out of which 73 percent was covered. Overall expenditure against income for the period was 69 percent.

**Note: The coverage excludes the in-kind human resource contribution of the Icelandic Red Cross which fully funded the head of delegation position from September 2006 with a total contribution of over CHF 200,000. Included in the coverage, but not in the original appeal, was the avian influenza (AI) project, which was covered by the Federation Global Fund in the amount of CHF 175,000.*

Click here to go directly to the attached financial reports:
[report 2006](#) [report 2007](#) [report 2006/2007](#)

No. of people we help: A total of approximately 700,000 beneficiaries were reached through various dissemination activities using television, radio, newspapers and outdoor billboards including various public relations and programme events.

Our partners: The MRCS is working with over 40 partners including: the World Health Organization (WHO), Ministry of Health, National Blood Centre, Blood Donor Agency, Ulaanbaatar City Governor, Youth for Health NGO, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), National Centre for Communicable Disease (NCCD), and National Journalists Association/Journalists Union, Australian Red Cross, New Zealand Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, Department for International Development (DFID), Japanese Red Cross, Republic of Korea Red Cross, British Red Cross, German Red Cross, the Red Cross Society of China, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Deseret International Charities, Mongolian National Radio and Television Broadcasting Agency, Mongolian Educational Channel, local prison authorities, National Youth Association, National Students Union, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, University of Agriculture, National Centre for Diseases with Natural Foci, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor, Traffic Authority, Border/Customs Control, local health departments, traffic police, the National AIDS Foundation (NAF), the National AIDS Committee (NAC), the National Voluntary Counselling and Testing VCT Working Group, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Current Context

Poverty and harsh climate conditions continue to be two of the key factors leading to vulnerability in Mongolia. Interventions are needed to ensure the health and care of poor communities have been a key focus of the national society, whether through home visits serving over 7,000 people living in poor conditions, or through training programmes to help impoverished internal immigrants register for government welfare allowance. Providing hay and livestock to herding families whose herds are wiped out during harsh winters (known as "dzuds" in Mongolia) in which temperatures approach -40° C in some areas and thick layers of ice prevent animals from grazing. Stigma and discrimination are also two factors that add to the vulnerability of certain populations, which when added with poverty can make it harder to access health information and services. The HIV response programme continues to work with marginalized groups such as prisoners, men who have sex with men (MSM), and sex workers to not only help them protect their health but advocate for more enabling environments through cooperation and sensitization training of media leaders.

However, these factors do not only affect beneficiaries, but also the individuals and organizational capacities of the Mongolian Red Cross Society. Low levels of national income make it difficult for branches to mobilize financial resources in their communities, and support for volunteers becomes an even bigger issue when many volunteers are very close to being beneficiaries themselves. Towards this end, the MRCS organizational development programme has worked with other core sectors to help improve both human and financial management and mobilization, building on the strengths and partnerships of the MRCS network to help address funding problems and retain the MRCS valuable base of over 13,000 volunteers.

Achievement of objectives

Health and Care

Objective: The MRCS and local communities are better prepared in addressing threats to the public's health and psychosocial well being.

The Federation-supported MRCS health and care programme comprises four distinct projects/sectors; health and first aid, social care, HIV/AIDS, blood donor recruitment and avian influenza preparedness.

Health and first aid

Objective: The health vulnerability of the population is minimized through the provision of health services, water and sanitation and first aid education.

Achievements: In March 2006, a trainer from the Finnish Red Cross conducted a training for 17 first aid instructors from MRCS branches and introduced a new first aid curricula. This has been used in subsequent regional and refresher trainings, reaching on average 40 new volunteers and staff each year. To support these activities, an additional 40 cardio pulmonary resuscitation mannequins, 500 first aid kits and 2,000 first aid manuals, were purchased or printed to be distributed to instructors working in the field. Extra manuals and kits will also be sold to raise money for the programme, in addition to trainings conducted at a charge.

Volunteer first aid clubs have continued to mobilize activities and campaigns, in some cases integrated with social care programme activities reaching over 500 people in Ulaanbaatar city alone. In addition, five new first aid clubs have been established, and mobile message boards with first aid, traffic safety, and injury prevention materials were provided to some of the most active clubs. Traffic safety efforts have also resulted in an eight-hour first aid lesson being included in basic driver's education, along with three traffic safety posts established in Ulaanbaatar city. Over 49 traffic police were trained in conjunction with these traffic safety posts, which are equipped with first aid kits and trained officers to respond in the event of an accident or other emergency.

World First Aid Day was celebrated in 2006 and 2007. Activities involved MRCS staff and volunteer members who participated in a various first aid activities such as water rescue and swimming contests. These events received good television coverage and helped generate interest both in Red Cross activities and first aid.

Serial news articles in both daily newspapers as well as the MRCS newsletter "*Humanity*" have also provided distance training on first aid to subscribers nationwide. In cooperation with Red Cross Youth, the Mongolian Educational Channel also broadcasted a series of first aid lessons hosted by MRCS instructors and youth members.

Challenges or Constraints: A lack of funding and integration into the health and care programme has left first aid activities with very little resources. Technical support is also lacking, as more development on the new community-based curricula needs to be carried out. The biggest challenge for the MRCS in first aid activities is addressing the fact that first aid is still widely considered the work of professional doctors only, who remain the only people by law allowed to practice first aid in Mongolia. Encouraging a change in public attitudes as well as in government policy will require greater advocacy on the need and benefits of first aid.

Best practices and lessons learned: First aid clubs have helped greatly in both spreading the word on first aid as well as actively promoting it in partnership with other programmes. Increased media awareness and interest in first aid has also helped in disseminating basic information to an even larger audience than before, and this, in conjunction with continuing the tradition of World First Aid Day, may help to spark changes in overall attitudes and behaviours on helping others in times of need.

Social Care

Objective: The health and psychosocial well-being of the most vulnerable, and the people affected by internal migration is improved through direct community-based welfare-related activities, referrals, advocacy and awareness-raising endeavours.

Achievements: The social care programme's main activities revolve around home visits conducted by volunteers on a monthly basis. Each month, volunteers visit at least three vulnerable families. In the participating eight branches supported through the Federation appeal, over 200 volunteers have been assisting some 600 families, including the elderly, disabled, those living alone, and those living in extreme poverty.

The newly established social care centres provide a venue for regular monthly meetings among both beneficiaries and volunteers where community members can meet and socialize as well as share experiences and information. Yearly celebrations such as World Elders Day, International Women's Day, International Disabled Day, International Children's Day, and International Volunteers Day are organized at the centres with various activities to involve both beneficiaries and volunteers in recognizing the variety of people in their communities. Activities have included donating toys to impoverished children and providing free medical services, which has resulted in around 80 percent of registered beneficiaries now receiving regular medical visits. Recognizing the work of over 1,000 MRCS volunteers was very important and was carried out by handing out cards and thank you notes to them on International Volunteers Day.



On International Red Cross Day, a member of the Help youth group "Enerd" of Tov province is helping to build and fix a fence for Dulmaa, a beneficiary of the social care programme of the MRCS. MRCS

In Ulaanbaatar, the social care programme has also been working with internal migrants by helping them to register with the government, qualifying them to receive welfare allowances each month if not successful in finding jobs. Volunteers have also been trained to help to provide advice to beneficiaries about what benefits are available and how they can access them. Referrals to other NGOs and government agencies as well as vocational training centres and programmes have also helped families generate their own income, to the point where many beneficiaries no longer need assistance. A number of beneficiaries have become volunteers, and over 100 have become special members of the MRCS.

The programme has also integrated with the HIV response programme to help 2,500 male prisoners in two maximum security prisons by distributing hygiene products such as razors and soaps, while providing psychological support to those prisoners whose families no longer keep in contact. Projects based on identified prisoners' needs have also resulted in 15 prisoners being trained as first aid providers, and 15 prisoners receiving vocational training for carpentry work, which has helped them raise a small income while learning a new profession which can help them when they leave prison.

Challenges or constraints: While the programme has led the way towards helping develop a volunteer policy through volunteer management training in collaboration with the Mongolian Volunteer Network, MRCS volunteers still face challenges such as burnout and normal turnover, and a constant need for quality training on care for elders as well as the mentally and physically disabled. Distances between beneficiaries also make it difficult for volunteers to conduct visits, as travel costs can be high. The branches will need to continuously improve their volunteer management in order to effectively carry out various Red Cross activities.

Best practices and lessons learned: Monthly beneficiary and volunteer meetings have really helped mobilize community members, while the activities organized publicly during these meetings, which include competitions and trainings hosted by volunteers, are raising the image of the MRCS. Beneficiaries have also been a source of experience and learning, particularly among elders who have facilitated some trainings during the regular meetings. In addition, networking with other NGOs and

government agencies, particularly the ministry of welfare and labour, has helped expand the scope of services available to beneficiaries, while again improving the image of the MRCS among its colleagues.

HIV Response

Objective: MRCS is a key player in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Mongolia by mobilizing the power of humanity and working in partnership with those most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, especially people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

Achievements: This past year, the MRCS has committed to establishing an HIV global alliance and scale up its HIV prevention work throughout Mongolia over the coming years. The programme plan has been drafted and the launch is tentatively scheduled for the early part of the second quarter of 2008.

In 2006, the Federation supported activities of the HIV programme focused on the "Let's Go Home Healthy" project targeting male prisoners in two federal prisons, as well as a project targeting internal migrants in two districts of Ulaanbaatar, a youth peer education project in eight provinces, and information dissemination activities, particularly for World AIDS Day. These activities, in addition to bilateral projects, have led HIV response to be a leading programme at MRCS.

In terms of the prison project, following the initial HIV sensitization training and renovation in 2006, more than 370 peer educators have been trained to disseminate information to approximately 6,000 prisoners in both prisons. HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STI) testing was also provided to over 900 prisoners, and several were treated for syphilis and other STIs. Concerts and campaigns, as well as condom distribution and promotion for the prisoners, were also organized for World AIDS Day in both 2006 and 2007. Many prisoners have expressed their gratitude to the MRCS for giving them not only information but greater self confidence and a sense of self worth as they worked on the project.

Other MRCS HIV/AIDS projects included targeting internal migrants in Ulaanbaatar by training women who in turn would reach 20 families each in their respective community, reaching a total of 1,000 families.

Herder campaigns were also carried out in 2006 at the rural level, with a team of 30 MRCS staff and volunteers who visited over 200 herders directly and distributed over 8,000 pieces of information, education and communication (IEC) materials among herding communities.

Youth peer education also continues at branches in the western province of Mongolia. During these couple of years, over 250 peer educators have been trained and an additional 35 health instructors from each of the 37 branches were trained on HIV response education, to help integrate their activities into the HIV programme. The experience of the branches in carrying out HIV education has been greatly enhanced as a result, and many branches now carry out their own HIV education activities.

Campus-wide campaigns, including radio broadcasts on campus frequencies and dormitory trainings, reached over 8,000 college students. Television broadcasts and coverage of the events helped further spread the word about HIV prevention.

Information campaigns reached their peak in both years on World AIDS Day. It is estimated that during train campaigns, more than 8,000 passengers were reached, while an additional 7,000 citizens and youths at stations along the route were provided with relevant information.

Challenges or constraints: The HIV response programme has greatly scaled up its activities over the past two years, but challenges in working with new target groups have caused pauses along the way, and the MRCS has realized that it must focus its key target groups in order to maximize effectiveness and reduce overload. Turnover of prepared peer educators and lack of sustainable funding to support peer educators at all branches have also led to problems for continuing peer education efforts nationwide.

Best practices and lessons learned: HIV response has successfully learned to tackle new target communities and adapt its approach, and while it is still learning from its achievements in the fields of working with prisoners and other marginalized groups, such as MSM and sex workers in its bilateral projects, these ground-breaking activities have helped pave the way for future HIV interventions in Mongolia. Moreover, active involvement in national level HIV response mechanisms such as the

national AIDS committee has helped the MRCS to advocate and coordinate with other organizations. The MRCS has recognized that the key component to HIV prevention lies in empowering communities and working in equal partnership with them to spread the word on HIV/AIDS and address related issues and problems that create obstacles in accessing condoms, testing, treatment, and information.

Blood Donor Recruitment

Objective: The population has benefited from a blood donor recruitment programme that has resulted in better awareness, better services and enhanced national society capacities.

Achievements: Despite limited funding, the blood donor programme made important steps over the past two years, including in 2006 securing of funding from the Mongolian government for the first time since 2002, despite years of being responsible for the government's blood donor recruitment programme. This marks a milestone in the blood donor programme's attempts to gain greater support from the government, and while support currently is small, it may lead to increased support in the future.

A Federation's manual on voluntary blood donors has also been reprinted and is being used in conducting regional as well as national trainings for both recruiters and blood centre staff. As a result of such trainings, recruiters have not only improved their skills at mobilizing communities, but regional blood centres have been able to assess their blood needs and set targets for the number of donations each year.

Probably one of the biggest achievements, however, has been the successful scaling up of youth targeted activities. Over 17 Youth Donor 25 clubs have been established in Ulaanbaatar city, overseen by a coordination council of 30 youth members who drafted their own plan for the young donor movement in 2006. Youth campaigns on campuses have reached over 3,500 students directly.

World Blood Donor Day, 2006 and 2007 was also successfully organized, with cooperation from the WHO and the national blood centre. Honorary blood donors were recognized and presented awards during the event, which attracted 400 people and generated media attention. Other television spots for Club 25, as well as television and radio campaigns on humanitarian donors and a special blood donor themed quiz show have helped raise awareness and disseminate correct information on blood donation.

Challenges or constraints: Attitudes of the public still remain a key obstacle to recruitment. Many people, particularly in rural areas, have misperceptions that donating blood will cause them to age prematurely or weaken them. Those that do donate are also donating primarily to receive free blood testing, causing high donor deferral rates due to diseases such as hepatitis viruses. More donor education needs to be done. However, funding for IEC materials remains limited and while new materials are printed each year, they are not enough to cover the entire population. Government support is slowly increasing, but donors and technical support are still necessary to help the programme scale up its efforts and improve the quality of its programming.

Best practices and lessons learned: The Youth Donor 25 Clubs have been hugely successful. Youth and student donors now comprise 35.5 percent of all donors, and since 2005 the number of donors between 18 and 25 years of age has increased by over 12 percent. Cooperation and advocacy with the government is also slowly paying off, and hopefully this will continue into the future.

Avian Influenza Preparedness

Objective: By the end of 2007, the target communities in at least in five provinces possess increased awareness on avian influenza prevention.

Achievements: The MRCS submitted its proposal to the avian influenza (AI) global appeal at the end of 2006, and in April 2007 began activities towards preventing possible outbreaks of this disease in five selected vulnerable provinces in the central and western regions, with a three-day workshop on AI prevention and response at which two master MRCS trainers and 52 peer educators participated. The MRCS AI programme plan was devised according to a baseline survey which was conducted in the target areas to assess current knowledge and attitudes on AI. The survey revealed that over 70 percent of herders and communities in the area had access to television, which will be one of the chosen media platforms for future information campaigns.

During the implementation (still ongoing to April 2008) close cooperation has been maintained with provinces representing local government, branches, and NEMA agencies including the national centre for diseases with natural foci.

The production of IEC materials was made with permission from UNICEF and disseminated to the public, and copies of the Federation manual on AI was translated into both Mongolian and Kazakh languages to be used for trainers. Trained volunteers have been conducting their own local campaigns among poultry farmers, drivers, children, herders, and other identified communities.

Challenges or constraints: While cooperation among related AI response agencies is good at the national level, extending this to local rural sites is more problematic. The lack of a national policy on health in disasters contributes to this problem. Also the geographic expanse of Mongolia and widely spread population contribute to making rural campaigns more difficult and costly to organize.

Best practices and lessons learned: Active volunteer participation and initiative has been key to the project's success. In addition, allowing provinces to identify their own target communities and needs has helped create a more varied and tailored response that fits better into local response efforts.

Disaster Management

Objective: Community vulnerability in times of disasters, including emergency health, is reduced by strengthening the MRCS capacity as well as improving disaster management through skilled staff and volunteers.

Achievements: Disaster response has been improved with the updating of all training materials and teacher files, which were used for trainings involving over 726 volunteers. First aid teams have been established at the local level, although further capacity building of primary level branches still needs to be done. Volunteers have also been actively organizing mobile campaigns, with the help of new LCD projectors and vans provided to the regional data processing centres (RDPC) to enable them to travel throughout distant rural cities and disseminate information and training.

The hay project, continuing after past successes, faced challenges when funding was delayed in 2006 and arrived only at the end of harvest season, and because droughts reduced the amount of hay produced to only 3,150 tonnes (50 percent of the target amount) in 2006 to only 1,700 tonnes (20 percent of the target amount) in 2007. Still, over 2,500 vulnerable herding families received hay free of charge, and another 236 unemployed herders were seasonally employed for the harvest. Participating RDPC's gained valuable experience in hay production while receiving new equipment including tractors, bailers, rakes, tools, and spare parts.



Project is in full operation in Huysgul province in north-west Mongolia, imp the Red Cross branch of Moron. MRCS

Both national and local herder consultation meetings were held regularly which brought together partner disaster response organizations and members of the agricultural sector to discuss disaster preparedness and enhanced cooperation.

National disaster preparedness and disaster management campaigns were successfully held using the media to its full extent to raise awareness on disasters, particularly among youths. The campaigns included television and radio broadcasts covering a wide range of topics such as fire, animal diseases, winter safety, floods, and more that were prepared and broadcast nationwide.

Challenges or Constraints: Key challenges included delays in funding, which for season-based activities such as the hay project, greatly impacted the ability of the programme to reach its targets. While the national society tried its best to operate on its own funding during the delays, key equipment and other costs could not be covered. Additionally, natural conditions such as droughts affected most of the provinces over these two years and greatly reduced the amount of hay produced in preparation for winter. In order to meet this challenge in provinces such as those in the Gobi where hay cannot be produced at all, the disaster management programme has begun purchasing trucks for transporting hay from provinces where agricultural conditions are better.



Food and non-food relief items were distributed to victims affected storm in Gobi Altai province in 2006. The distribution took place in a sports hall in Altai town. MRCS

Best practices and lessons learned: The newly updated training materials have helped improve community-based disaster preparedness and response efforts. In addition, consultations with herders have helped not only to raise awareness among one of the most vulnerable communities in Mongolia, but have increased the active involvement of those communities in supporting each other. The success of television and radio broadcasting, which has proven to be an effective method of reaching rural areas, will also be continued as long as funding remains available.

Organizational Development

Objective: The MRCS has implemented sustainable programmes through enhanced branch capacities as a result of better financial and human resource management.

Achievements: Key themes for organizational development over these two years have included better human and financial resource mobilization, both in policy development as well as capacity building. For human resources, this process began with follow-up workshops and reviews of the new human resource policy, adopted in December 2005, which improved the recruitment, selection, development, retention, and appraisal of MRCS staff. The new human resource policy has also served as a springboard for generating ideas for a new volunteer policy. During the 11th MRCS general assembly, a working team was created to develop a draft of the policy, and following this, a review of all branches' volunteer activities and conditions of volunteers was conducted. The survey showed that 70 percent of branches mobilize only a third of their total volunteers, showing a strong need to develop volunteer management skills. Towards this end, meetings and cooperation with the Mongolian national volunteer network have developed curricula for volunteer management training, with a manual in Mongolian, which has been carried out for staff from all branches. Sustainable management training has also been conducted for over 50 staff members at the branch level.

The capacity building fund has also helped support various projects aimed mostly at income generation and renovation. Through the fund, heat was installed at three branches and income generating equipment was procured for branch side-businesses such as cafes, herds of livestock, hotels, gardens, computer service centres, and more.

The upgrading and creation of new modules of the MRCS finance software programme took place in late 2006 and during the first three quarters of 2007. Further enhancement of the finance software will take place in 2008 and a cascading of the system to selective branches is also in the pipeline. A draft version of the new financial procedures is ready for revision and it is hoped that the MRCS governing board will approve these procedures in the first quarter of 2008.

Cooperation with sister national societies in the area of organizational development continued in 2006 and 2007. The Red Cross Society of China is funding income generation projects and sister branch experience sharing programmes between MRCS and RCSC province level offices. Improvements in joint fundraising campaigns have also helped build the capacity of the MRCS, while fostering friendship and closer relations with the RCSC. To help increase financial resource mobilization, the New Zealand Red Cross supported fundraising activities as well as income generating projects. Grassroots fundraising training carried out last December for over 60 staff and volunteers from Ulaanbaatar district branches helped generate ideas on how funds could be raised in communities, including through better engagement with the private sector.

Constraints and challenges: The programme still lacks funding, and as a result is not able to target all branches equally, but instead is limited to providing support to only a few select branches at a time. Moreover, income generation projects face challenges as MRCS personnel have next to no experience in running businesses. As a result, some income generation initiatives end up failing or not bringing in enough funds.

Best practices and lessons learned: Management training, particularly on volunteer management, has been recognized as an important part of capacity building efforts, and cooperation with the Mongolian National Volunteer Network in this regard has been truly beneficial. Advice and support from the Federation delegation in Mongolia on business practices, finance software improvements, income generating activities and fundraising issues has been very valuable. The new financial procedures and software will also help to improve the way the MRCS manages and mobilizes its financial resources and make the organization more transparent and efficient.

Humanitarian Values

Objective: The capacity of the MRCS in promoting awareness, understanding and acceptance of the Movement's fundamental principles and humanitarian values has increased.

Achievements: Despite a lack of funding, the humanitarian values programme has greatly succeeded in establishing relationships with key media contacts to help disseminate information on MRCS activities across all the programmes. In 2006, a cooperation agreement with the Mongolian National Radio and Television Broadcast Company sparked a year of renewed efforts between MRCS and the media to cover more programmes than ever before. As an example of excellent integration and a way to overcome the lack of independent funding, the HV programme has helped push each of the core MRCS programmes to devote a percentage of their budgets towards information dissemination activities, and provides technical support and assistance as well as contacts with media professionals to help produce broadcast spots and reports on MRCS. Now all programmes of the MRCS have regular broadcasts for major events, campaigns, and activities, and special documentaries and series such as first aid lessons aimed at youth are broadcast on the education channel and helping the MRCS to reach more people nationwide than ever before.

The HV programme continues to support the monthly publishing of the "*Humanity*" newsletter, which provides information on what's happening in MRCS as well as first aid lessons, weather reports for disaster preparedness, and even English lessons. World Red Cross Day is celebrated each year with the annual "Humanitarian Heroes" ceremony, where exemplary individuals from all walks of life are recognized and presented awards in a nationally broadcasted event for their years of dedication to humanitarian causes. The MRCS also participates in the Khan Quest military exercise every year, in cooperation with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), to disseminate information, manuals, and training on international humanitarian law and the role of the Red Cross in conflicts to over 500 soldiers a year. In addition, special campaigns such as the "Our Role in Humanitarian Deeds" campaign led a tour of staff and volunteers around the country to increase awareness on the Red Cross and its activities, while recruiting new members and raising donations for the MRCS.

Constraints and challenges: A lack of funding is one constraint to scaling up information dissemination activities, which can be very costly as prices of preparing broadcasts and printing materials are high. Technical support, which often comes with bilateral funding or projects, is also lacking.

Best practices and lessons learned: Cooperation with national and local media partners has been the key success of the programme. As the humanitarian values programme officer offers the perspective of a journalist, the humanitarian values programme offers valuable counsel to all programmes and helps make and keep contacts with other journalists and media professionals in the field. This contribution has directly contributed to the increase of indirect beneficiaries reached by television, radio, and newspaper articles. Continued efforts and emphasis on mass media will continue to help raise knowledge of health and disasters, as well as the Red Cross, among Mongolians nationwide.

Working in partnership

Partnership and networking has been a key factor in the success of MRCS programming, and the national society works hard to maintain its valuable relationships both with government, non-government, and private organizations and businesses. Each of the eight core programmes has a long list of partner agencies, including generous bilateral donors, many of whom are from sister national societies contributing the bulk of funding for programmes. In addition, cooperation with mass media leaders, as mentioned before, has helped scale up both the reach and recognition of MRCS activities. Moreover, by cooperating with local government agencies and other related NGOs, the MRCS is able to coordinate its efforts for the benefit of the community, generating more support and resources for its thousands of beneficiaries nationwide.

Coordination with the government at the national level remains weak in the sense that the government still does not fully support the mission of the MRCS, and has not provided any major contribution of funding or assistance since the MRCS's independence following the country's transition to democracy. However, individual efforts with branches of the government, including the ministry of health which for the first time provided funding for blood donor recruitment efforts over the past two years, has slowly been changing this. Political instability and high turnover of government officials and ministers, however, makes any progress slow and subject to change overnight.

Contributing to longer-term impact

All MRCS programmes operate according to Federation approved standards as well as the seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Significant progress towards ensuring equity for all groups and gender concerns has been made, and starting next year the MRCS will start a small gender initiative aimed towards sensitizing the staff on gender issues. Community empowerment remains a key theme for all activities, where community leaders, groups, and agencies are consistently consulted with and work together with Red Cross staff to accomplish goals.

The eight core programmes continue to contribute to the main Global Agenda Goals of reducing the impact of disasters, for example through the strengthening of the regional disaster preparedness centres ability to respond and provide relief to affected families, as well as reducing the impact of diseases through programmes such as HIV response and AI preparedness which educate communities most at risk on how to protect themselves from disease as well as ensure treatment and care for those affected.

Looking ahead

Identified priorities for the coming year will include improving the strategic and policy base of all programmes. Following the MRCS programme managers participation in a regional workshop on conducting vulnerability and capacity assessments, the MRCS will revitalize and focus its efforts by developing a national strategy for its health and care programmes as well as disaster management. In addition, the need for national level strategies regarding issues such as health in emergencies will also be a focus for advocacy efforts in the future. Of course, the HIV operational alliance programme plan will be launched in 2008 and will bring the MRCS forward in a massive scale up of its HIV prevention and care programmes.

Working on enhancing synergies between programmes to allow both bilateral and multilateral funding supplement / compliment each other remains a priority for the national society. Success in shifting to a

more community-based approach will also continue, with the need for technical support in designing more needs-based curricula and approaches for working with target communities.

How we work

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 \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering quality and accountable 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>

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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